

INGERSOLL'S  
LECTURES  
AND ESSAYS

THIRD SERIES

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INGERSOLL'S LECTURES AND ESSAYS

(THIRD SERIES)

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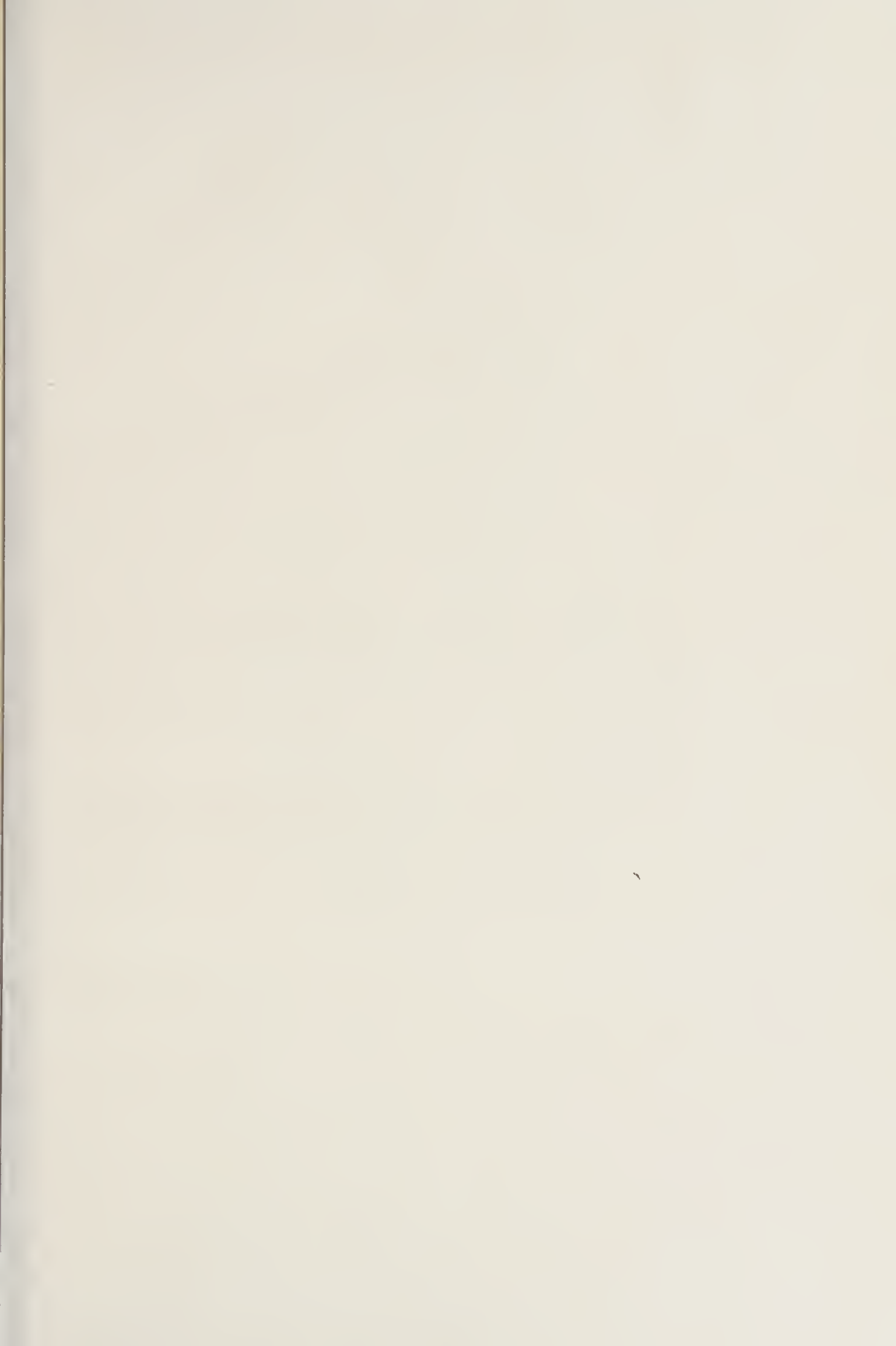
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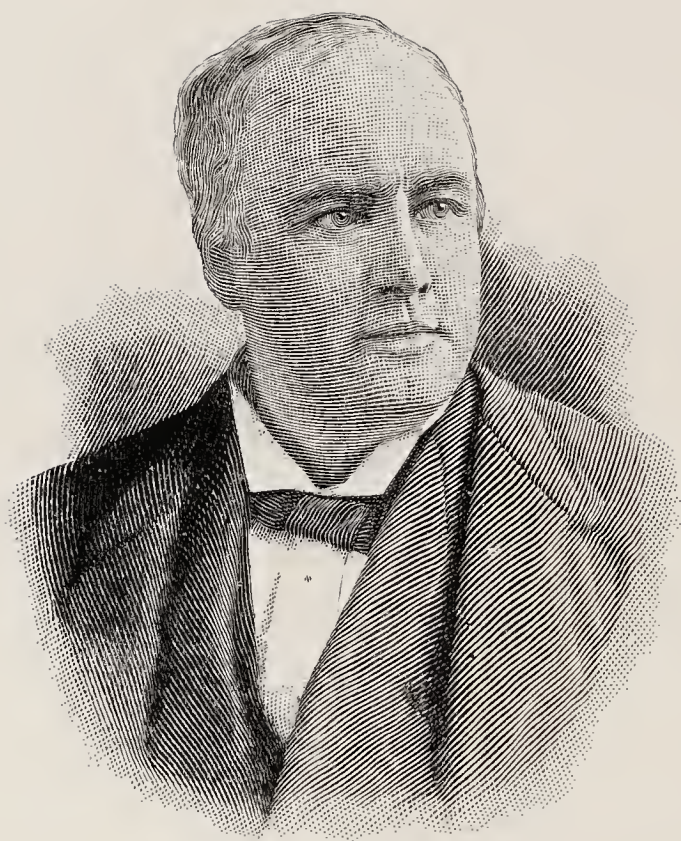
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LECTURES

AND ESSAYS

(A SELECTION)

BY

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

(Third Series)

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# INGERSOLL'S LECTURES AND ESSAYS

## THIRD SERIES

### WHICH WAY?

#### I.

THERE are two ways—the natural and the supernatural.

One way is to live for the world we are in, to develop the brain by study and investigation, to take, by invention, advantage of the forces of nature, to the end that we may have good houses, raiment, and food—to the end that the hunger of the mind may be fed through art and science.

The other way is to live for another world that we expect, to sacrifice this life that we have for another that we know not of, to obtain by prayer and ceremony the assistance, the protection, of some phantom above the clouds.

One way is to think—to investigate, to observe, and follow the light of reason. The other way is to believe, to accept, to follow, to deny the authority of your own senses, your own reason, and bow down to those who are impudent enough to declare that they know.

One way is to live for the benefit of your fellowmen—for your wife and children—to make those you love happy, and to shield them from the sorrows of life.

The other way is to live for ghosts, goblins, phantoms, and gods, with the hope that they will reward you in another world.

One way is to enthrone reason and rely on facts, the other to crown credulity and live on faith.

One way is to walk by the light within—by the flame that illumines the brain, verifying all by the senses—by touch and sight and sound.

The other way is to extinguish the sacred light and follow blindly the steps of another.

One way is to be an honest man, giving to others your thought, standing erect, intrepid, careless of phantoms and hells.

The other way is to cringe and crawl, to betray your nobler self, and to deprive others of the liberty that you have not the courage to enjoy.

Do not imagine that I hate the ones who have taken the wrong side and travelled the wrong road.

Our fathers did the best they could. They believed in the supernatural, and they thought that sacrifices and prayer, fasting and weeping, would induce the supernatural to give them sunshine, rain, and harvest—long life in this world and eternal joy in another. To them God was an absolute monarch, quick to take offence, sudden in anger, terrible in punishment; jealous, hateful to his enemies, generous to his favourites. They believed also in the existence of an evil God, almost the equal of the other God in strength, and a little superior in cunning. Between these two Gods was the soul of man like a mouse between two paws.

Both of these Gods inspired fear. Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil; but they were

afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes, and tempests, were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.

Everything was under the direction and control of supernatural powers. The air—the darkness—were filled with angels and devils; witches and wizards planned and plotted against the pious—against the true believers. Eclipses were produced by the sins of the people, and the unusual was regarded as the miraculous. In the good old times Christendom was an insane asylum, and insane priests and prelates were the keepers. There was no science. The people did not investigate—did not think. They trembled and believed. Ignorance and superstition ruled the Christian world.

At last a few began to observe, to make records, and to think.

It was found that eclipses came at certain intervals, and that their coming could be foretold. This demonstrated that the actions of men had nothing to do with eclipses. A few began to suspect that earthquakes and storms had natural causes, and happened without the slightest reference to mankind.

Some began to doubt the existence of evil spirits, or the interference of good ones in the affairs of the world. Finding out something about astronomy, the great number of the stars, the certain and continuous motions of the planets, and the fact that many of them were vastly larger than the earth—ascertaining something about the earth—the slow development of forms, the growth and distribution of plants, the formation of islands and continents, the parts played by fire, water, and air through countless centuries; the kinship of all life; fixing the earth's place in the constellation of the sun; by experiment and research discovering a few secrets of chemistry; by the invention of printing, and the

preservation and dissemination of facts, theories, and thoughts, they were enabled to break a few chains of superstition, to free themselves a little from the dominion of the supernatural, and to set their faces towards the light. Slowly the number of investigators and thinkers increased, slowly the real facts were gathered, the sciences began to appear, the old beliefs grew a little absurd, the supernatural retreated and ceased to interfere in the ordinary affairs of men.

Schools were founded, children were taught, books were printed, and the thinkers increased. Day by day confidence lessened in the supernatural, and day by day men were more and more impressed with the idea that man must be his own protector, his own providence. From the mists and darkness of savagery and superstition emerged the dawn of the natural. A sense of freedom took possession of the mind, and the soul began to dream of its power. On every side were invention and discovery, and bolder thought. The Church began to regard the friends of science as its foes. Theologians resorted to chain and fagot—to mutilation and torture.

The thinkers were denounced as heretics and atheists—as the minions of Satan and the defamers of Christ. All the ignorance, prejudice, and malice of superstition were aroused, and all united for the destruction of investigation and thought. For centuries this conflict was waged. Every outrage was perpetrated, every crime committed by the believers in the supernatural. But, in spite of all, the disciples of the natural increased, and the power of the Church waned. Now, the intelligence of the world is on the side of the natural. Still the conflict goes on—the supernatural constantly losing, and the natural constantly gaining. In a few years the victory of science over superstition will be complete and universal.

So, there have been for many centuries two philosophies of life: one in favour of the destruction of the passions—the lessening of wants—and absolute reliance

on some higher power; the other in favour of the reasonable gratification of the passions, the increase of wants, and their supply by industry, ingenuity, and invention, and the reliance of man on his own efforts. Diogenes, Epictetus, Socrates to some extent, Buddha, and Christ, all taught the first philosophy. All despised riches and luxury, all were the enemies of art and music, the despisers of good clothes and good food and good homes. They were the philosophers of poverty and rags, of huts and hovels, of ignorance and faith. They preached the glories of another world and the miseries of this. They derided the prosperous, the industrious, those who enjoyed life, and reserved heaven for beggars.

This philosophy is losing authority, and now most people are anxious to be happy here in this life. Most people want food and roof and raiment, books and pictures, luxury and leisure. They believe in developing the brain—in making servants and slaves of the forces of nature.

Now, the intelligent men of the world have cast aside the teachings, the philosophy of the ascetics. They no longer believe in the virtue of fasting and self-torture. They believe that happiness is the only good, and that the time to be happy is now—here, in this world. They no longer believe in the rewards and punishments of the supernatural. They believe in consequences, and that the consequences of bad actions are evil, and the consequences of good actions are good.

They believe that man, by investigation, by reason, should find out the conditions of happiness, and then live and act in accordance with such conditions. They do not believe that earthquakes, or tempests, or volcanoes, or eclipses, are caused by the conduct of men. They no longer believe in the supernatural. They do not regard themselves as the serfs, servants, or favourites of any celestial king. They feel that many evils can be avoided by knowledge, and

for that reason they believe in the development of the brain. The school-house is their church, and the university their cathedral.

So there have been for some centuries two theories of government—one theological, the other secular.

The king received his power direct from God. It was the business of the people to obey. The priests received their creeds from God, and it was the duty of the people to believe.

The theological government is growing somewhat unpopular. In England Parliament has taken the place of God, and in the United States government derives its powers from the consent of the governed. Probably Emperor William is the only man in Germany who really believes that God placed him on the throne and will keep him there whether the German people are satisfied or not. Italy has retired the Catholic God from politics, France belongs to and is governed by the French, and even in Russia there are millions who hold the Czar and all his divine pretensions in contempt.

The theological governments are passing away, and the secular are slowly taking their places. Man is growing greater, and the gods are becoming vague and indistinct. These "divine" governments rest on the fear and ignorance of the many—the cunning, the impudence, and the mendacity of the few. A secular government is born of the intelligence, the honesty, and the courage, not only of the few, but of the many.

We have found that man can govern himself without the assistance of priest or pope, of ghost or God. We have found that religion is not self-evident, and that to believe without evidence is not a praiseworthy action. We know that the self-evident is the square and compass of the brain, the polar star in the firmament of mind. And we know that no one denies the self-evident. We also know that there is no particular goodness in believing when the evidence



is sufficient, and certainly there is none in saying that you believe when the evidence is insufficient.

The believers have not all been good. Some of the worst people in the whole world have been believers. The gentlemen who made Socrates drink hemlock were believers. The Jews who crucified Christ were believers in and worshippers of God. The devil believes in the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and yet it does not seem to have affected his moral character. According to the Bible, he trembles, but he does not reform. At last we have concluded that we have a right to examine the religion of our fathers.

## II.

All Christians know that all the Gods, except Jehovah, were created by man; that they were, and are, false, foolish, and monstrous; that all the heathen temples were built and all their altars erected in vain; that the sacrifices were wasted, that the priests were hypocrites, that their prayers were unanswered, and that the poor people were deceived, robbed, and enslaved. But, after all, is our God superior to the gods of the heathen?

We can ask this question now because we are prosperous, and prosperity gives courage. If we should have a few earthquakes or a pestilence, we might fall on our knees, shut our eyes, and ask the forgiveness of God for ever having had a thought. We know that famine is the friend of faith, and that calamity is the sunshine of superstition. But as we have no pestilence or famine, and as the crust of the earth is reasonably quiet, we can afford to examine into the real character of our God.

It must be admitted that the use of power is an excellent test of character.

Would a good God appeal to prejudice, the armour, fortress, sword, and shield of ignorance? To credulity, the ring in the priest-led nose of stupidity? To fear, the capital stock of imposture, the lever of hypocrisy? Would a good

God frighten or enlighten his children? Would a good God appeal to reason or ignorance, to justice or selfishness, to liberty or the lash?

To our first parents in the Garden of Eden our God said nothing about the sacredness of love, nothing about children, nothing about education, about justice or liberty.

After they had violated his command he became ferocious as a wild beast. He cursed the earth, and to Eve he said: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. Thy husband shall rule over thee."

Our God made love the slave of pain, made wives serfs, and brutalised the fire-sides of the world.

Our God drowned the whole world, with the exception of eight people; made the earth one vast and shoreless sea covered with corpses.

Why did he cover the world with men, women, and children, knowing that he would destroy them? Why did he not try to reform them? Why would he create people, knowing that they could not be reformed?

Is it possible that our God was intelligent and good?

After the flood, our God selected the Jews and abandoned the rest of his children. He paid no attention to the Hindoos, neglected the Egyptians, ignored the Persians, forgot the Assyrians, and failed to remember the Greeks. And yet he was the father of them all. For many centuries he was only a tribal God, protecting the few and despising the many. Our God was ignorant, knew nothing of astronomy or geology. He did not even know the shape of the earth, and thought the stars were only specks.

He knew nothing of disease. He thought that the blood of a bird that had been killed over running water was good medicine. He was revengeful and cruel, and assisted some of his children to butcher and destroy others. He commanded them to murder men, wives, and children, and to keep alive the

maidens and distribute them among his soldiers.

Our God established slavery—commanded men to buy their fellow men; to make merchandise of wives and babes. Our God sanctioned polygamy, and made wives the property of their husbands. Our God murdered the people for the crimes of kings.

No man of intelligence, no one whose brain has not been poisoned by superstition, paralysed by fear, can read the Old Testament without being forced to the conclusion that our God was a wild beast.

If we must have a god, let him be merciful. Let us remember that "the quality of mercy is not strained." Let us remember that, when the sword of Justice becomes a staff to support the weak, it bursts into blossom, and that the perfume of that flower is the only incense, the only offering, the only sacrifice that mercy will accept.

### III.

So, there have been two theories about the cause and cure of disease. One is the theological, the other the scientific.

According to the theological idea, diseases were produced by evil spirits, by devils who entered into the bodies of people.

These devils could be cast out by prophets, inspired men, and priests.

While Christ was upon earth his principal business was to cast out evil spirits.

For many centuries the priests followed his example, and during the Middle Ages millions of devils were driven from the bodies of men. Diseases were cured with little images of consecrated pewter, with pieces of paper, with crosses worn about the neck—by having plaster of Paris Virgins and clay Christs at the head of the bed, by touching the bones of dead saints, or pieces of the true cross, or one of the nails that was driven through the flesh of Christ, or a garment that had been worn by the Virgin Mary, or by sprinkling the breast with holy

water, or saying prayers, or counting beads, or making the stations of the cross, or by going without meat, or wearing hair-cloth, or in some way torturing the body. All diseases were supposed to be of supernatural origin, and all cures were of the same nature. Pestilences were stopped by processions, led by priests carrying the Host.

Nothing was known of natural causes and effects. Everything was miraculous and mysterious. The priests were cunning, and the people credulous.

Slowly another theory as to the cause and cure of disease took possession of the mind. A few discarded the idea of devils, and took the ground that diseases were naturally produced, and that many of them could be cured by natural means.

At first the physician was exceedingly ignorant, but he knew more than the priest. Slowly but surely he pushed the priest from the bedside. Some people finally became intelligent enough to trust their bodies to the doctors, and remained ignorant enough to leave the care of their souls with the priests. Among civilised people the theological theory has been cast aside, and the miraculous, the supernatural, no longer has a place in medicine. In Catholic countries the peasants are still cured by images, prayers, holy water, and the bones of saints; but when the priests are sick they send for a physician, and now even the Pope, God's agent, gives his sacred body to the care of a doctor.

The scientific has triumphed to a great extent over the theological.

No intelligent person now believes that devils inhabit the bodies of men. No intelligent person now believes that devils are trying to control the actions of men. No intelligent person now believes that devils exist.

And yet, at the present time, in the City of New York, Catholic priests are exhibiting a piece of one of the bones of Saint Anne, the supposed mother of the Virgin Mary. Some of these priests may be credulous imbeciles, and some

may be pious rogues. If they have any real intelligence, they must know that there is no possible way of proving that the piece of bone ever belonged to Saint Anne. And if they have any real intelligence, they must know that even the bones of Saint Anne were substantially like the bones of other people, made of substantially the same material, and that the medical and miraculous qualities of all human bones must be substantially the same. And yet these priests are obtaining from their credulous dupes thousands and thousands of dollars for the privilege of seeing this bone and kissing the box that contains the "sacred relic."

Archbishop Corrigan knows that no one knows who the mother of the Virgin Mary was, that no one knows about any of the bones of this unknown mother, knows that the whole thing is a theological fraud, knows that his priests, or priests under his jurisdiction, are obtaining money under false pretences. Cardinal Gibbons knows the same; but neither of these pious gentlemen has one word to say against this shameless crime. They are willing that priests for the benefit of the Church should make merchandise of the hopes and fears of ignorant believers; willing that fraud that produces revenue should live and thrive.

This is the honesty of the theologian. If these gentlemen should be taken sick, they would not touch the relic. They would send for a physician.

Let me tell you a Japanese story that is exactly in point:—

An old monk was in charge of a monastery that had been built above the bones of a saint. These bones had the power to cure diseases, and they were so placed that by thrusting the arm through an orifice they could be touched by the hand of the pilgrim. Many people, afflicted in many ways, came and touched these bones. Many thought they had been benefited or cured, and many in gratitude left large sums of money with the monk. One day the

old monk addressed his assistant as follows: "My dear son, business has fallen off, and I can easily attend to all who come. You will have to find another place. I will give you the white donkey, a little money, and my blessing."

So the young man, mounted upon the beast, went his way. In a few days his money was gone, and the white donkey died. An idea took possession of the young man's mind. By the side of the road he buried the donkey, and then to every passer-by held out his hands and said in solemn tones: "I pray thee give me a little money to build a temple above the bones of the sinless one."

Such was his success that he built the temple, and then thousands came to touch the bones of the sinless one. The young man became rich, gave employment to many assistants, and lived in the greatest luxury.

One day he made up his mind to visit his old master. Taking with him a large retinue of servants, he started for the old home. When he reached the place the old monk was seated by the doorway. With great astonishment he looked at the young man and his retinue. The young man dismounted and made himself known, and the old monk cried: "Where hast thou been? Tell me, I pray thee, the story of thy success."

"Ah," the young man replied, "old age is stupid, but youth has thoughts. Wait until we are alone, and I will tell you all."

So that night the young man told his story—told about the death and burial of the donkey, the begging of money to build a temple over the bones of the sinless one, and of the sums of money he had received for the cures the bones had wrought.

When he finished a satisfied smile crept over his pious face as he added: "Old age is stupid, but youth has thoughts."

"Be not so fast," said the old monk, as he placed his trembling hand on the head of his visitor. "Young man, this



monastery in which your youth was passed, in which you have seen so many miracles performed, so many diseases cured, was built above the sacred bones of the mother of your little jackass."

#### IV.

There are two ways of accounting for the sacred books and religions of the world.

One is to say that the sacred books were written by inspired men, and that our religion was revealed to us by God.

The other is to say that all books have been written by men, without any aid from supernatural powers, and that all religions have been naturally produced.

We find that other races and peoples have sacred books and prophets, priests, and Christs; we find, too, that their sacred books were written by men who had the prejudices and peculiarities of the race to which they belonged, and that they contain the mistakes and absurdities peculiar to the people who produced them.

Christians are perfectly satisfied that all the so-called sacred books, with the exception of the Old and New Testaments, were written by men, and that the claim of inspiration is perfectly absurd. So they believe that all religions, except Judaism and Christianity, were invented by men. The believers in other religions take the ground that their religion was revealed by God, and that all others, including Judaism and Christianity, were made by men. All are right and all are wrong. When they say that "other" religions were produced by men, they are right; when they say that their religion was revealed by God, they are wrong.

Now, we know that all tribes and nations have had some kind of religion; that they have believed in the existence of good and evil beings, spirits or powers, that could be softened by gifts or prayer. Now, we know that at the foundation of every religion, of all worship, is the pale and bloodless face of fear. Now we know that all religions and all sacred

books have been naturally produced—all born of ignorance, fear, and cunning. Now we know that the gifts, sacrifices, and prayers were all in vain; that no god received, and that no god heard or answered.

A few years ago prayers decided the issue of battle, and priests, through their influence with God, could give the victory. Now no intelligent man expects any answer to prayer. He knows that Nature pursues her course without reference to the wishes of men, that the clouds float, the winds blow, the rain falls, and the sun shines without regard to the human race. Yet millions are still praying, still hoping that they can gain the protection of some god, that some being will guard them from accident and disease. Year after year the ministers make the same petitions, pray for the same things, and keep on in spite of the fact that nothing is accomplished.

Whenever good men do some noble thing the clergy give their God the credit, and when evil things are done they hold the men who did the evil responsible, and forget to blame their God.

Praying has become a business, a profession, a trade. A minister is never happier than when praying in public. Most of them are exceedingly familiar with their God. Knowing that he knows everything, they tell him the needs of the nation and the desires of the people; they advise him what to do and when to do it. They appeal to his pride, asking him to do certain things for his own glory. They often pray for the impossible. In the House of Representatives in Washington I once heard a chaplain pray for what he must have known was impossible. Without a change of countenance, without a smile, with a face solemn as a sepulchre, he said: "I pray thee, O God, to give Congress wisdom." It may be that ministers really think that their prayers do good, and it may be that frogs imagine that their croaking brings spring.

The men of thought now know that

all religions and all sacred books have been made by men—that no revelation has come from any being superior to nature; that all the prophecies were either false or made after the event; that no miracle ever was or ever will be performed; that no God wants the worship or the assistance of man; that no prayer has ever coaxed one drop of rain from the sky—one ray of light from the sun. That no prayer has stayed the flood, or the tides of the sea, or folded the wings of the storm. That no prayer has given water to the cracked and bleeding lips of thirst, or food to the famishing. That no prayer has stopped the pestilence, stilled the earthquake, or quieted the volcano. That no prayer has shielded the innocent, succoured the oppressed, unlocked the dungeon's door, broke the chains of slaves, rescued the good and noble from the scaffold, or extinguished the fagot's flame.

The intelligent man now knows that we live in a natural world; that gods and devils and the sons of God are all phantoms; that our religion and our deity are much like the religion and deities of other nations, and that the stone god of a savage answers prayer and protects his worshippers precisely the same, and to just the same extent, as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

#### V.

There are two theories about morals. One theory is that the moral man obeys the commands of a supposed God without stopping to think whether the commands are right or wrong. He believes that the will of the God is the source and fountain of right. He thinks a thing is wrong because the God prohibits it, not that the God prohibits it because it is wrong. This theory calls not for thought, but for obedience. It does not appeal to reason, but to the fear of punishment, the hope of reward. God is a king whose will is law, and men are serfs and slaves.

Many contend that without a belief in the existence of God morality is impos-

sible, and that virtue would perish from the earth.

This absurd theory, with its "Thus saith the Lord," has been claimed to be independent of and superior to reason.

The other theory is that right and wrong exist in the nature of things; that certain actions preserve or increase the happiness of man, and that other actions cause sorrow and misery; that all those actions that cause happiness are moral, and that all others are evil, or indifferent. Right and wrong are not revelations from some supposed god, but have been discovered through the experience and intelligence of man. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural about morality. Neither has morality anything to do with another world, or with an infinite being. It applies to conduct here, and the effect of that conduct on ourselves and others determines its nature.

In this world people are obliged to supply their wants by labour. Industry is a necessity, and those who work are the natural enemies of those who steal.

It required no revelation from God to make larceny unpopular. Human beings naturally object to being injured, maimed, or killed; and so everywhere, and at all times, they have tried to protect themselves.

Men did not require a revelation from God to put in their minds the thought of self-preservation. To defend yourself when attacked is as natural as to eat when you are hungry.

To determine the quality of an action by showing that it is in accordance with or contrary to the command of some supposed God is superstition pure and simple. To test all actions by their consequences is scientific and in accord with reason.

According to the supernatural theory, natural consequences are not taken into consideration. Actions are wrong because they have been prohibited, and right because they have been commanded. According to the Catholic Church, eating meat on Friday is a sin that deserves



eternal punishment. And yet, in the nature of things, the consequences of eating meat on that day must be exactly the same as eating meat on any other. So all the Churches teach that unbelief is a crime, not in the nature of things, but by reason of the will of God.

Of course, this is absurd and idiotic. If there be an infinite God, he cannot make that wrong which in the nature of things is right. Neither can he make an action good the natural consequences of which are evil. Even an infinite God cannot change a fact. In spite of him, the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle would remain the same.

All the relations of things to things, of forces to forces, of acts to acts, of causes to effects, in the domain of what is called matter, and in the realm of what is called mind, are just as certain, just as unchangeable, as the relation between the diameter and circumference of a circle.

An infinite God could not make ingratitude a virtue any easier than he could make a square triangle.

So the foundations of the moral and the immoral are in the nature of things—in the necessary relation between conduct and well-being; and an infinite God cannot change these foundations, and cannot increase or diminish the natural consequences of actions.

In this world there is neither chance nor caprice, neither magic nor miracle. Behind every event, every thought and dream, is the efficient, the natural, and necessary cause.

The effort to 'make the will of a supposed God the foundation of morality has filled the world with misery and crime, extinguished in millions of minds the light of reason, and in countless ways hindered and delayed the progress of our race.

Intelligent men now know that if there be an infinite God man cannot in any way increase or decrease the happiness of such a being. They know that man can only commit crimes against sentient

beings who, to some extent at least, are within his power; and that a crime by a finite being against an infinite being is an infinite impossibility.

## VI.

For many thousands of years man has believed in and sought for the impossible. In chemistry he has searched for a universal solvent, for some way in which to change the baser metals into gold. Even Lord Bacon was a believer in this absurdity. Thousands of men, during many centuries, in thousands of ways, sought to change the nature of lead and iron so that they might be transformed to gold. They had no conception of the real nature of things. They supposed that they had originally been created by a kind of magic, and could by the same kind of magic be changed into something else. They were all believers in the supernatural. So in mechanics men sought for the impossible. They were believers in perpetual motion, and they tried to make machines that would, through a combination of levers, furnish the force that propelled them.

Thousands of ingenious men wasted their lives in the vain effort to produce machines that would in some wonderful way create a force. They did not know that force is eternal, that it can neither be created nor destroyed. They did not know that a machine having perpetual motion would necessarily be a universe within itself, or independent of this, and in which the force called friction would be necessarily changed, without loss, into the force that propelled—the machine itself causing or creating the original force that put it in motion. And yet, in spite of all the absurdities involved, for many centuries men, regarded by their fellows as intelligent and learned, tried to discover the great principle of "perpetual motion."

Our ancestors studied the stars because in them they thought it possible to learn the fate of nations, the life and destiny of the individual. Eclipses, wandering

comets, the relations of certain stars, were the forerunners or causes of prosperity—or disaster, of the downfall or upbuilding of kingdoms. Astrology was believed to be a science, and those who studied the stars were consulted by warriors, statesmen, and kings. The account of the star that led the wise men of the East to the infant Christ was written by a believer in astrology. It would be hard to overstate the time and talent wasted in the study of this so-called science. The men who believed in astrology thought that they lived in a supernatural world—a world in which causes and effects had no necessary connection with each other—in which all events were the result of magic and necromancy.

Even now, at the close of the nineteenth century, there are hundreds and hundreds of men who make their living by casting the horoscopes of idiots and imbeciles.

The “perpetual motion” of the mechanic, the universal solvent of the chemist, the changing of lead into gold, the foretelling events by the relations of stars, were all born of the same ignorance of nature that caused the theologian to imagine an uncaused cause as the cause of all causes and effects.

The theologian insisted that there was something superior to nature, and that that something was the creator and preserver of nature.

Of course, there is no more evidence of the existence of that “something” than there is of the philosopher’s stone.

The mechanics who now believe in perpetual motion are insane; so are the chemists who seek to change one metal into another; so are the honest astrologers; and in a few more years the same can truthfully be said of the honest theologians.

Many of our ancestors believed in the existence of and sought for the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. They believed that an old man could stoop and drink from this fountain, and that while he drank his grey hairs would slowly change, that

the wrinkles would disappear, that his dim eyes would brighten and grow clear, his heart throb with manhood’s force and rhythm, while in his pallid cheeks would burst into blossom the roses of health.

They were believers in the supernatural, the miraculous; and nothing seemed more probable than the impossible.

## VII.

Most people use names in place of arguments. They are satisfied to be disciples, followers of the illustrious dead. Each Church, each party, has a list of “great men,” and they throw the names of these men at each other when discussing their dogmas and creeds.

Men prove the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, by the admissions of soldiers, statesmen, and kings. And in the same way they establish the existence of heaven and hell. Dispute one of their dogmas, and you will instantly be told that Isaac Newton or Matthew Hale was on the other side, and you will be asked whether you claim to be superior to Newton or Hale. In our own country the ministers, to establish their absurdities, quote the opinions of Webster and of other successful politicians as though such opinions were demonstrations.

Most Protestants will cheerfully admit that they are inferior in brain and genius to some men who have lived and died in the Catholic faith; that in the matter of preaching funeral sermons they are not equal to Bossuet; that their letters are not as interesting and polished as those written by Pascal; that Torquemada excelled them in the genius of organisation; and that for planning a massacre they would not for a moment claim the palm from Catherine de Medici. And yet, after these admissions, these same Protestants would insist that the Pope is an unblushing impostor and the Catholic Church a vampire.

The so-called “great men” of the world have been mistaken in many



things. Lord Bacon denied the Copernican system of astronomy, and believed to the day of his death that the sun and stars journeyed about this little earth. Matthew Hale was a firm believer in the existence of witches and wizards. John Wesley believed that earthquakes were caused by sin, and that they could be prevented by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. John Calvin regarded murder as one of the means to preserve the purity of the gospel. Martin Luther denounced Galileo as a fool because he was opposed to the astronomy of Moses. Webster was in favour of the Fugitive Slave law, and held the book of Job in high esteem. He wanted votes, and he knelt to the South. He wanted votes, and he flattered the Church.

#### VIII.

Volumes might be written on the follies and imbecilities of "great" men.

Only a few years ago the really great men were persecuted, imprisoned, or burned. In this way the Church was enabled to keep the "great" men on her side.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible to tell what the "great" men really thought. We only know what they said. These "great" men had families to support; they had a prejudice against prisons, and objected to being burned, and it may be that they thought one way and talked another.

The priests said to these men: "Agree with the creed, talk on our side, or you will be persecuted to the death." Then the priests turned to the people and cried: "Here what the great men say."

For a few years we have had something like liberty of speech, and many men have told their thoughts. Now the theologians are not quite so apt to appeal to names as formerly. The really great are not on their side. The leaders of modern thought are not Christians. Now the unbelievers can repeat names—names that stand for intellectual triumphs. Humboldt, Helmholtz, Haeckel, and Huxley, Darwin, Spencer, and Tyndall,

and many others, stand for investigation, discovery, for vast achievements in the world of thought. These men were and are thinkers, and they had and have the courage to express their thoughts. They were not and are not puppets of priests or the trembling worshippers of ghosts.

For many years most of the presidents of American colleges have been engaged in the pious work of trying to prevent the intellectual advancement of the race. To such an extent have they succeeded that none of their students have been or are great scientists.

For the purpose of bolstering their creed the orthodox do not now repeat the names of the living; their witnesses are in the cemetery. All the "great" Christians are dead.

To-day we want arguments, not names; reasons, not opinions. It is degrading to blindly follow a man or a Church. Nothing is nobler than to be governed by reason. To be vanquished by the truth is to be a victor. The man who follows is a slave. The man who thinks is free.

We must remember that most men have been controlled by their surroundings. Most of the intelligent men in Turkey are followers of Mohammed. They were rocked in the cradle of the Koran; they received their religious opinions as they did their features—from their parents. Their opinion on the subject of religion is of no possible value. The same may be said of the Christians of our country. Their belief is the result, not of thought, of investigation, but of surroundings.

All religions have been the result of ignorance, and the seeds were sown and planted in the long night of savagery.

In the decline of the Roman power, in the times when prosperity died, when commerce almost ceased, when the sceptre of authority fell from weak and nerveless hands, when arts were lost and the achievements of the past forgotten or unknown, then Christians came, and, holding in contempt all earthly things, told their fellows of another world—of joy eternal beyond the clouds.

If learning had not been lost ; if the people had been educated ; if they had known the literature of Greece and Rome ; if they had been familiar with the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, with the philosophy of Zeno and Epicurus, with the orations of Demosthenes ; if they had known the works of art, the miracles of genius, the passions in marble, the dreams in stone ; if they had known the history of Rome ; if they had understood Lucretius, Cicero, and Cæsar ; if they had studied the laws, the decisions of the Prætors ; if they had known the thoughts of all the mighty dead, there would have been no soil on which the seeds of Christian superstition could have taken root and grown.

But the early Christians hated art, and song, and joy. They slandered and maligned the human race, insisted that the world had been blighted by the curse of God, that this life should be used only in making preparation for the next, that education filled the mind with doubt, and science led the soul from God.

#### IX.

There are two ways. One is to live for God. That has been tried, and the result has always been the same. It was tried in Palestine many years ago, and the people who tried it were not protected by their God. They were conquered, overwhelmed, and exiled. They lost their country, and were scattered over the earth. For many centuries they expected assistance from their God. They believed that they would be gathered together again, that their cities and temples and altars would be rebuilt, that they would again be the favourites of Jehovah, that with his help they would overcome their enemies and rule the world. Century by century the hope has grown weaker and weaker, until now it is regarded by the intelligent as a foolish dream.

Living for God was tried in Switzerland, and is ended in slavery and torture. Every avenue that led to improvement, to progress, was closed. Only those in

authority were allowed to express their thoughts. No one tried to increase the happiness of people in this world. Innocent pleasure was regarded as sin, laughter was suppressed, all natural joy despised, and love itself denounced as sin.

They amused themselves with fasting and prayer, hearing sermons, talking about endless pain, committing to memory the genealogies in the Old Testament, and now and then burning one of their fellow-men.

Living for God was tried in Scotland. The people became the serfs and slaves of the blessed Kirk. The ministers became petty tyrants. They poisoned the very springs of life. They interfered with every family, invaded the privacy of every home, sowed the seeds of superstition and fear, and filled the darkness with devils. They claimed to be divinely inspired, that they delivered the messages of God, that to deny their authority was blasphemy, and that all who refused to do their bidding would suffer eternal pain. Under their government Scotland was a land of sighing and sorrow, of grief and pain. The people were slaves.

Living for God was tried in New England. A government was formed in accordance with the Old Testament. The laws, for the most part, were petty and absurd ; the penalties cruel and bloody to the last degree. Religious liberty was regarded as a crime, as an insult to God. Persons differing in belief from those in power were persecuted, whipped, maimed, and exiled. People supposed to be in league with the devil were imprisoned or killed. A theological government was established ; ministers were the agents of God, they dictated the laws and fixed the penalties. Everything was under the supervision of the clergy. They had no pity, no mercy. With all their hearts they hated the natural. They promised happiness in another world, and did all they could to destroy the pleasures of this.

Their greatest consolation, their purest joy, was found in their belief that all who



failed to obey their words, to wear their yoke, would suffer infinite torture in the eternal dungeons of hell.

Living for God was tried in the Dark Ages. Thousands of scaffolds were wet with blood, countless swords were thrust through human hearts. The flames of fagots consumed the flesh of men, dungeons became the homes of those who thought. In the name of God every cruelty was practised, every crime committed, and liberty perished from the earth. Everywhere the result has been the same. Living for God has filled the world with blood and flame.

There is another way. Let us live for man, for this world. Let us develop the brain and civilise the heart. Let us ascertain the conditions of happiness, and live in accordance with them. Let us do what we can for the destruction of ignorance, poverty, and crime. Let us do our best to supply the wants of the body, to satisfy the hunger of the mind, to ascertain the secrets of nature, to the end that we may make the invisible forces the tireless servants of the human race, and fill the world with happy homes.

Let the gods take care of themselves. Let us live for man. Let us remember that those who have sought for the truths of nature have never persecuted their fellow-men. The astronomers and chemists have forged no chains, built no dungeons. The geologists have invented no instrument of torture. The philosophers have not demonstrated the truth of their theories by burning their neighbours. The great infidels, the thinkers, have lived for the good of man.

It is noble to seek for truth, to be intellectually honest, to give to others a true transcript of your mind, a photograph of thoughts in honest words.

#### X.

There are two ways—the narrow way, along which the selfish go in single file, not wide enough for husband and wife to walk side by side while children clasp

their hands. The narrow road over the desert of superstition, “with here and there a traveller.” The narrow grass-grown path, filled with flints and broken glass, bordered by thistles and thorns, where the twice-born limping walk with bleeding feet. If by this path you see a flower, do not pick it. It is a temptation. Beneath its leaves a serpent lies. Keep your eyes on the New Jerusalem. Do not look back for wife or child or friend. Think only of saving your own soul. You will be just as happy in heaven with all you love in hell. Believe, have faith, and you will be rewarded for the goodness of another. Look neither to the right nor left. Keep on, straight on, and you will save your worthless, withered, selfish soul.

This is the narrow road that leads from earth to the Christian’s heartless heaven.

There is another way—the broad road.

Give me the wide and ample way, the way broad enough for us all to go together. The broad way, where the birds sing, where the sun shines, and the streams murmur. The broad way, through the fields where the flowers grow, over the daisied slopes where sunlight, lingering, seems to sleep and dream.

Let us go the broad way with the great world, with science and art, with music and the drama, with all that gladdens, thrills, refines, and calms.

Let us go the wide road with husband and wife, with children and friends, and with all there is of joy and love between the dawn and dusk of life’s strange day.

This world is a great orange tree filled with blossoms, with ripening and ripened fruit, while, underneath the bending boughs, the fallen slowly turn to dust.

Each orange is a life. Let us squeeze it dry, get all the juice there is, so that when death comes we can say: “There is nothing left but withered peel.”

Let us travel the broad and natural way. Let us live for man.

To think of what the world has suffered from superstition, from religion,

from the worship of beast, and stone, and God, is almost enough to make one insane. Think of the long, long night of ignorance and fear! Think of the agony, the sufferings of the past, of the days that are dead!

I look. In gloomy caves I see the sacred serpents coiled, waiting for their sacrificial prey. I see their open jaws, their restless tongues, their glittering eyes, their cruel fangs. I see them seize and crush in many horrid folds the helpless children given by fathers and mothers to appease the Serpent-God. I look again. I see temples wrought of stone and gilded with barbaric gold. I see altars red with human blood. I see the solemn priests thrust knives in the white breasts of girls. I look again. I see other temples, and other altars, where greedy flames devour the flesh and blood of babes. I see other temples, and other priests, and other altars dripping with the blood of oxen, lambs, and doves.

I look again. I see other temples, and other priests, and other altars, on which are sacrificed the liberties of man. I look. I see the cathedrals of God, the huts of peasants, the robes of priests and kings, the rags of honest men. I look again. The lovers of God are the murderers of men. I see dungeons filled with the noblest and the best. I see exiles, wanderers, outcasts, millions of martyrs, widows, and orphans. I see the cunning instruments of torture, and hear the shrieks and sobs and moans of millions dead.

I see the dungeon's gloom, I hear the clank of chains. I see the fagot's flames, the scorched and blackened face, the writhing limbs. I hear the jeers and scoffs of pious fiends. I see the victim on the rack, I hear the tendons as they break. I see a world beneath the feet of priests, liberty in chains, every virtue a crime, every crime a virtue, intelligence despised, stupidity sainted, hypocrisy crowned, and the white forehead of honour wearing the brand of shame. This was.

I look again, and in the East of hope's fair sky the first pale light shed by the herald star gives promise of another dawn. I look, and from the ashes, blood, and tears the heroes leap to bless the future and avenge the past. I see a world at war, and in the storm and chaos of the deadly strife thrones crumble, altars fall, chains break, creeds change. The highest peaks are touched with holy light. The dawn has blossomed. I look again. I see discoverers sailing across mysterious seas. I see inventors cunningly enslave the forces of the world. I see the houses being built for schools. Teachers, interpreters of nature, slowly take the place of priests. Philosophers arise, thinkers give the world their wealth of brain, and lips grow rich with words of truth. This is.

I look again, but towards the future now. The popes and priests and kings are gone—the altars and the thrones have mingled with the dust—the aristocracy of land and cloud have perished from the earth and air, and all the gods are dead. A new religion sheds its glory on mankind. It is the gospel of this world, the religion of the body, of the heart and brain, the evangel of health and joy. I see a world at peace, where labour reaps its true reward, a world without prisons, without work-houses, without asylums for the insane, a world on which the gibbet's shadow does not fall; a world where the poor girl, trying to win bread with the needle, the needle that has been called “the asp for the breast of the poor,” is not driven to the desperate choice of crime or death, of suicide or shame. I see a world without the beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless, stony stare, the piteous wail of want, the pallid face of crime, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn. I see a race without disease of flesh or brain, shapely and fair, the married harmony of form and use; and as I look life lengthens, fear dies, joy deepens, love intensifies. The world is free. This shall be.

## SOME REASONS WHY

## I.

RELIGION makes enemies instead of friends. That one word "religion" covers all the horizon of memory with visions of war, of outrage, of persecution, of tyranny and death. That one word brings to the mind every instrument with which man has tortured man. In that one word are all the fagots and flames and dungeons of the past, and in that word is the infinite and eternal hell of the future.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow-men. Although they have been preaching universal love, the Christian nations are the warlike nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. The musket, the revolver, the rifled cannon, the bombshell, the torpedo, the explosive bullet, have been invented by Christian brains. Above all other arts the Christian world has placed the art of war.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast.

Whoever imagines himself a favourite with God holds other people in contempt.

Whenever a man believes that he has the exact truth from God, there is in that man no spirit of compromise. He has not the modesty born of the imperfections of human nature; he has the arrogance of theological certainty and the tyranny born of ignorant assurance. Believing himself to be the slave of God, he imitates his master, and of all tyrants the worst is a slave in power.

When a man really believes that it is necessary to do a certain thing to be happy forever, or that a certain belief is necessary to ensure eternal joy, there is in that man no spirit of concession. He divides the whole world into saints and sinners, into believers and unbelievers, into God's sheep and Devil's goats, into people who will be glorified and people who will be damned.

A Christian nation can make no compromise with one not Christian; it will either compel that nation to accept its doctrine, or it will wage war. If Christ, in fact, said "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled.

## II.—DUTIES TO GOD.

Religion is supposed to consist in a discharge of the duties we owe to God. In other words, we are taught that God is exceedingly anxious that we should believe a certain thing. For my part, I do not believe that there is any infinite being to whom we owe anything. The reason I say this is, we cannot owe any duty to any being who requires nothing—to any being that we cannot possibly help, to any being whose happiness we cannot increase. If God is infinite, we cannot make him happier than he is. If God is infinite, we can neither give nor can he receive anything. Anything that we do or fail to do cannot, in the slightest degree, affect an infinite God; consequently, no relations can exist between the finite and the infinite, if by relations is meant mutual duties and obligations.

Some tell us that it is the desire of God that we should worship him. What for? Why does he desire worship? Others tell us that we should sacrifice something to him. What for? Is he



in want? Can we assist him? Is he unhappy? Is he in trouble? Does he need human sympathy? We cannot assist the Infinite, but we can assist our fellow-men. We can feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and enlighten the ignorant, and we can help, in some degree at least, towards covering this world with the mantle of joy.

I do not believe there is any being in this universe who gives rain for praise, who gives sunshine for prayer, or who blesses a man simply because he kneels.

The Infinite cannot receive praise or worship.

The Infinite can neither hear nor answer prayer.

An infinite personality is an infinite impossibility.

### III.—INSPIRATION.

We are told that we have in our possession the inspired will of God. What is meant by the word "inspired" is not exactly known; but, whatever else it may mean, certainly it means that the "inspired" must be the true. If it is true, there is, in fact, no need of its being inspired—the truth will take care of itself.

The Church is forced to say that the Bible differs from all other books; it is forced to say that it contains the actual will of God. Let us, then, see what inspiration really is. A man looks at the sea, and the sea says something to him. It makes an impression upon his mind. It awakens memory, and this impression depends upon the man's experience—upon his intellectual capacity. Another looks upon the same sea. He has a different brain; he has had a different experience. The sea may speak to him of joy, to the other of grief and tears. The sea cannot tell the same thing to any two human beings, because no two human beings have had the same experience.

A year ago, while the cars were going from Boston to Gloucester, we passed through Manchester. As the cars stopped, a lady sitting opposite, speaking

to her husband, and looking out of the window and catching, for the first time, a view of the sea, cried out: "Is it not beautiful!" and the husband replied: "I'll bet you could dig clams right here!"

Another, standing upon the shore, listening to what the Greek tragedian called "the multitudinous laughter of the sea," may say: Every drop has visited all the shores of the earth; every one has been frozen in the vast and icy North; every one has fallen in snow, has been whirled by storms around mountain peaks; every one has been kissed to vapour by the sun; every one has worn the seven-hued garment of light; every one has fallen in pleasant rain, gurgled from springs and laughed in brooks while lovers wooed upon the banks; and every one has rushed with mighty rivers back to the sea's embrace. Everything in nature tells a different story to all eyes that see and to all ears that hear.

Once in my life, and once only, I heard Horace Greeley deliver a lecture. I think its title was, "Across the Continent." At last he reached the mammoth trees of California, and I thought: "Here is an opportunity for the old man to indulge his fancy. Here are trees that have outlived a thousand human governments. There are limbs above his head older than the pyramids. While man was emerging from barbarism to something like civilisation, these trees were growing. Older than history, every one appeared to be a memory, a witness, and a prophecy. The same wind that filled the sails of the Argonauts had swayed these trees." But these trees said nothing of this kind to Mr. Greeley. Upon these subjects not a word was told to him. Instead, he took his pencil, and, after figuring awhile, remarked: "One of these trees, sawed into inch-boards, would make more than three hundred thousand feet of lumber."

I was once riding on the cars in Illinois. There had been a violent thunderstorm. The rain had ceased, the sun was going down. The great



clouds had floated towards the West, and there they assumed most wonderful architectural shapes. There were temples and palaces domed and turreted, and they were touched with silver, with amethyst and gold. They looked like the homes of the Titans, or the palaces of the gods. A man was sitting near me. I touched him and said: "Did you ever see anything so beautiful?" He looked out. He saw nothing of the cloud, nothing of the sun, nothing of the colour; he saw only the country, and replied: "Yes, it is beautiful; I always did like rolling land."

On another occasion I was riding in a stage. There had been a snow, and after the snow a sleet, and all the trees were bent, and all the boughs were arched. Every fence, every log cabin, had been transfigured, touched with a glory almost beyond this world. The great fields were a pure and perfect white; the forests, drooping beneath their load of gems, made wonderful caves, from which one almost expected to see troops of fairies come. The whole world looked like a bride, jewelled from head to foot. A German on the back seat, hearing our talk and our exclamations of wonder, leaned forward, looked out of the stage window, and said: "Yes, it looks like a clean table cloth!"

So, when we look upon a flower, a painting, a statue, a star, or a violet, the more we know, the more we have experienced; the more we have thought, the more we remember; the more the statue, the star, the painting, the violet has to tell. Nature says to me all that I am capable of understanding—gives all that I can receive.

As with star, or flower, or sea, so with a book. A man reads Shakespeare. What does he get from him? All that he has the mind to understand. He gets his little cup full. Let another read him who knows nothing of the drama, nothing of the impersonations of passion, and what does he get? Almost nothing. Shakespeare has a different story for each reader. He is a world in

which each recognises his acquaintances—he may know a few, he may know all.

The impression that nature makes upon the mind, the stories told by sea and star and flower, must be the natural food of thought. Leaving out for the moment the impression gained from ancestors, the hereditary fears and drifts and trends—the natural food of thought must be the impression made upon the brain by coming in contact through the medium of the five senses with what we call the outward world. The brain is natural. Its food is natural. The result, thought, must be natural. The supernatural can be constructed with no material except the natural. Of the supernatural we can have no conception. Thought may be deformed, and the thought of one may be strange to, and denominated as unnatural by, another; but it cannot be supernatural. It may be weak, it may be insane, but it is not supernatural. Above the natural man cannot rise, even with the aid of fancy's wings. There can be deformed ideas, as there are deformed persons. There can be religions monstrous and misshapen, but they must be naturally produced. Some people have ideas about what they are pleased to call the supernatural; but what they call the supernatural is simply the deformed. The world is to each man according to each man. It takes the world as it really is, and that man to make that man's world; and that man's world cannot exist without that man.

You may ask, And what of all this? I reply, As with everything in nature, so with the Bible. It has a different story for each reader. Is, then, the Bible a different book to every human being who reads it? It is. Can God then, through the Bible, make the same revelation to two persons? He cannot. Why? Because the man who reads it is the man who inspires. Inspiration is in the man as well as in the book. God should have inspired readers as well as writers.

You may reply: "God knew that his book would be understood differently by each one, and that he really intended

that it should be understood as it is understood by each." If this is so, then my understanding of the Bible is the real revelation to me. If this is so, I have no right to take the understanding of another. I must take the revelation made to me through my understanding, and by that revelation I must stand. Suppose, then, that I do read this Bible honestly, fairly, and when I get through I am compelled to say: "The book is not true"? If this is the honest result, then you are compelled to say either that God has made no revelation to me, or that the revelation that it is not true is the revelation made to me, and by which I am bound. If the book and my brain are both the work of the same Infinite God, whose fault is it that the book and the brain do not agree? Either God should have written a book to fit my brain, or should have made my brain to fit his book.

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of him who reads. There was a time when its geology, its astronomy, its natural history, were inspired. That time has passed. There was a time when its morality satisfied the men who ruled mankind. That time has passed. There was a time when the tyrant regarded its laws as good; when the master believed in its liberty; when strength gloried in its passages; but these laws never satisfied the oppressed, they were never quoted by the slave.

We have a sacred book, an inspired Bible, and I am told that this book was written by the same being who made every star, and who peopled infinite space with infinite worlds. I am also told that God created man, and that man is totally depraved. It has always seemed to me that an infinite being has no right to make imperfect things. I may be mistaken; but this is the only planet I have ever been on; I live in what might be called one of the rural districts of this universe, consequently I may be mistaken; I simply give the best and largest thought I have.

#### IV.—GOD'S EXPERIMENT WITH THE JEWS.

The Bible tells us that men became so bad that God destroyed them all with the exception of eight persons; that afterwards he chose Abraham and some of his kindred, a wandering tribe, for the purpose of seeing whether or no they could be civilised. He had no time to waste with all the world. The Egyptians at that time, a vast and splendid nation, having a system of laws and free schools, believing in the marriage of the one man to the one woman; believing, too, in the rights of woman—a nation that had courts of justice and understood the philosophy of damages; these people had received no revelation from God—they were left to grope in Nature's night. He had no time to civilise India, wherein had grown a civilisation that fills the world with wonder still—a people with a language as perfect as ours, a people who had produced philosophers, scientists, poets. He had no time to waste on them; but he took a few, the tribe of Abraham. He established a perfect despotism—with no schools, with no philosophy, with no art, with no music—nothing but the sacrifices of dumb beasts, nothing but the abject worship of a slave. Not a word upon geology, upon astronomy; nothing even upon the science of medicine. Thus God spent hours and hours with Moses upon the top of Sinai, giving directions for ascertaining the presence of leprosy and for preventing its spread; but it never occurred to Jehovah to tell Moses how it could be cured. He told them a few things about what they might eat, prohibiting among other things four-footed birds, and one thing upon the subject of cooking. From the thunders and lightnings of Sinai he proclaimed this vast and wonderful fact: "Thou shalt not see the a kid in its mother's milk." He took these people, according to our sacred Scriptures, under his immediate care, and for the purpose of controlling them he wrought wonderful miracles in their sight.



Is it not a little curious that no priest of one religion has ever been able to astonish a priest of another religion by telling a miracle? Our missionaries tell the Hindoos the miracles of the Bible; and the Hindoo priests, without the movement of a muscle, hear them, and then recite theirs, and theirs do not astonish our missionaries in the least. Is it not a little curious that the priests of one religion never believe the priests of another? Is it not a little strange that the believers in sacred books regard all except their own as having been made by hypoerites and fools?

I heard the other day a story. A gentleman was telling some wonderful things, and the listeners, with one exception, were saying, as he proceeded with his tale: "Is it possible?" "Did you ever hear anything so wonderful?" and when he had concluded, there was a kind of chorus of "Is it possible?" and "Can it be?" One man, however, sat perfectly quiet, utterly unmoved. Another listener said to him: "Did you hear that?" and he replied: "Yes." "Well," said the other, "you did not manifest much astonishment." "Oh, no," was the answer; "I am a liar myself."

I am told by the sacred Scriptures that, as a matter of fact, God, even with the help of miracles, failed to civilise the Jews; and this shows of how little real benefit, after all, it is to have a ruler much above the people, or to simply excite the wonder of mankind. Infinite wisdom, if the account be true, could not civilise a single tribe. Laws made by Jehovah himself were not obeyed, and every effort of Jehovah failed. It is claimed that God made known his law and inspired men to write and teach his will, and yet it is found utterly impossible to reform mankind.

#### V.—CIVILISED COUNTRIES.

In all civilised countries it is now passionately asserted that slavery is a crime; that a war of conquest is murder; that polygamy enslaves woman, degrades man, and destroys home; that nothing

is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepit men, of helpless mothers, and of prattling babes; that captured maidens should not be given to their captors; that wives should not be stoned to death for differing with their husbands on the subject of religion. We know that there was a time, in the history of most nations, when all these crimes were regarded as divine institutions. Nations entertaining this view now are regarded as savage, and, with the exception of the South Sea Islanders, Feejees, a few tribes in Central Africa, and some citizens of Delaware, no human beings are found degraded enough to agree upon these subjects with Jehovah. The only evidence we can have that a nation has ceased to be savage is that it has abandoned these doctrines of savagery.

To everyone except a theologian it is easy to account for these mistakes and crimes by saying that civilisation is a painful growth; that the moral perceptions are cultivated through ages of tyranny, of crime, and of heroism; that it requires centuries for man to put out the eyes of self and hold in lofty and in equal poise the golden scales of Justice. Conscience is born of suffering. Mercy is the child of the imagination. Man advances as he becomes acquainted with his surroundings, with the mutual obligations of life, and learns to take advantage of the forces of nature.

The believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say that there was a time when slavery was right; when women could sell their babes; when polygamy was the highest form of virtue; when wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy when religious toleration was a crime; and when death was the just penalty for having expressed an honest thought. He is compelled to insist that Jehovah is as bad now as he was then; that he is as good now as he was then. Once, all the crimes that I have mentioned were commanded by God; now they are prohibited. Once, God was in favour of them all; now the Devil is their defender. In other words,

the Devil entertains the same opinion to-day that God held four thousand years ago. The Devil is as good now as Jehovah was then, and God was as bad then as the Devil is now. Other nations besides the Jews had similar laws and ideas—believed in and practised the same crimes, and yet it is not claimed that they received a revelation. They had no knowledge of the true God, and yet they practised the same crimes, of their own motion, that the Jews did by command of Jehovah. From this it would seem that man can do wrong without a special revelation.

The passages upholding slavery, polygamy, war, and religious persecution are certainly not evidences of the inspiration of that book. Suppose nothing had been in the Old Testament upholding these crimes, would the modern Christian suspect that it was not inspired on that account? Suppose nothing had been in the Old Testament except laws in favour of these crimes, would it still be insisted that it was inspired? If the Devil had inspired a book, will some Christian tell us in what respect, on the subjects of slavery, polygamy, war, and liberty, it would have differed from some parts of the Old Testament? Suppose we knew that after inspired men had finished the Bible the Devil had gotten possession of it and had written a few passages, what part would Christians now pick out as being probably his work? Which of the following passages would be selected as having been written by the Devil: "Love thy neighbour as thyself," or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every woman, but all the women children keep alive for yourselves"?

Is there a believer in the Bible who does not now wish that God, amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, had said to Moses that man should not own his fellow-man; that women should not sell their babes; that all men should be allowed to think and investigate for themselves, and that the sword never should be unsheathed to shed innocent blood? Is there a believer who would

not be delighted to find that every one of the infamous passages are interpolations, and that the skirts of God were never reddened by the blood of maiden, wife, or babe? Is there an honest man who does not regret that God commanded a husband to stone his wife for suggesting the worship of some other God? Surely we do not need an inspired book to teach us that slavery is right, that polygamy is virtue, and that intellectual liberty is a crime.

#### VI.—A COMPARISON OF BOOKS.

Let us compare the gems of Jehovah with Pagan paste. It may be that the best way to illustrate what I have said is to compare the supposed teachings of Jehovah with those of persons who never wrote an inspired line. In all ages of which any record has been preserved men have given their ideas of justice, charity, liberty, love, and law. If the Bible is the work of God, it should contain the sublimest truths; it should excel the works of man; it should contain the loftiest definitions of justice, the best conceptions of human liberty, the clearest outlines of duty, the tenderest and noblest thoughts. Upon every page should be found the luminous evidence of its divine origin. It should contain grander and more wonderful things than man has written.

It may be said that it is unfair to call attention to bad things in the Bible. To this it may be replied that a divine being ought not to put bad things in his book. If the Bible now upholds what we call crimes, it will not do to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is? It may be said that the thoughts are inspired. This would include only thoughts expressed without words. If ideas are inspired, they must be expressed by inspired words—that is to say, by an inspired arrangement of words. If a sculptor were inspired of God to make a statue, we would not say that the marble was inspired, but the statue—that is to say, the relation of part to



part, the married harmony of form and function. The language, the words, take the place of the marble, and it is the arrangement of the words that Christians claim to be inspired. If there is an uninspired word, or a word in the wrong place, until that word is known a doubt is cast on every word the book contains.

If it was worth God's while to make a revelation at all, it was certainly worth his while to see that it was correctly made—that it was absolutely preserved. Why should God allow an inspired book to be interpolated? If it was worth while to inspire men to write it, it was worth while to inspire men to preserve it; and why should he allow another person to interpolate in it that which was not inspired? He certainly would not have allowed the man he inspired to write contrary to the inspiration. He should have preserved his revelation. Neither will it do to say that God adapted his revelation to the prejudices of man. It was necessary for him to adapt his revelation to the capacity of man, but certainly God would not confirm a barbarian in his prejudices. He would not fortify a heathen in his crimes.

If a revelation is of any importance, it is to eradicate prejudice. They tell us now that the Jews were so ignorant, so bad, that God was compelled to justify their crimes, in order to have any influence with them. They say that, if he had declared slavery and polygamy to be crimes, the Jews would have refused to receive the Ten Commandments. They tell us that God did the best he could; that his real intention was to lead them along slowly, so that in a few hundred years they would be induced to admit that larceny and murder and polygamy and slavery were not virtues. I suppose, if we now wished to break a cannibal of the bad habit of devouring missionaries, we would first induce him to cook them in a certain way, saying: "To eat cooked missionary is one step in advance of eating your missionary raw. After a few years a little mutton could be cooked with

missionary, and year after year the amount of mutton could be increased and the amount of missionary decreased, until in the fulness of time the dish could be entirely mutton, and after that the missionaries would be absolutely safe."

If there is anything of value, it is liberty—liberty of body, liberty of mind. The liberty of body is the reward of labour. Intellectual liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of the mind, and without it the world is a prison, the universe a dungeon.

If the Bible is really inspired, Jehovah commanded the Jewish people to buy the children of the strangers that sojourned among them, and ordered that the children thus bought should be an inheritance for the children of the Jews, and that they should be bondmen and bondwomen forever. Yet Epictetus, a man to whom no revelation was ever made, a man whose soul followed only the light of nature, and who had never heard of the Jewish God, was great enough to say: "Will you not remember that your servants are by nature your brothers, the children of God? In saying that you have bought them, you look down on the earth, and into the pit, on the wretched law of men long since dead, but you see not the laws of the gods."

We find that Jehovah, speaking to his chosen people, assured them that their bondmen and their bondmaids must be "of the heathen that were round about them." "Of them," said Jehovah, "shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." And yet Cicero, a pagan, Cicero who had never been enlightened by reading the Old Testament, had the moral grandeur to declare: "They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens, but not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, with which benevolence and justice would perish forever."

If the Bible is inspired, Jehovah, God of all worlds, actually said: "And if a man smite his servant or his maid with

a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be sorely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." And yet Zeno, founder of the Stoics, centuries before Christ was born, insisted that no man could be the owner of another, and that the title was bad, whether the slave had become so by conquest or by purchase.

Jehovah ordered a Jewish general to make war, and gave, among others, this command: "When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." And yet Epictetus, whom we have already quoted, gave this marvellous rule for the guidance of human conduct: "Live with thy inferiors as thou wouldst have thy superiors live with thee."

Is it possible, after all, that a being of infinite goodness and wisdom said: "I will heap mischief upon them; I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of grey hairs"; while Seneca, an uninspired Roman, says: "The wise man will not pardon any crime that ought to be punished, but he will accomplish, in a nobler way, all that is sought in pardoning. He will spare some and watch over some, because of their youth, and others on account of their ignorance. His clemency will not fall short of justice, but will fulfil it perfectly"?

Can we believe that God ever said to anyone: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labour; let there be none to

extend mercy upon him, neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children"? If he ever said these words, surely he had never heard this line, this strain of music from the Hindoo: "Sweet is the lute to those who have not heard the prattle of their own children."

Jehovah, "from the clouds and darkness of Sinai," said to the Jews: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me..... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Contrast this with the words put by the Hindoo in the mouth of Brahma: "I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshippers."

Compare these passages: the first, a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns.

Is it possible that the real God ever said: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him and will destroy him from the midst of my people"?

Compare that passage with one from a Pagan: "Is it better to keep silence for the remainder of your life than to speak falsely."

Can we believe that a being of infinite mercy gave this command: "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour; consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day"?

Surely that God was not animated by so great and magnanimous a spirit as was Antoninus, a Roman emperor, who declared that "he had rather keep a



single Roman citizen alive than slay a thousand enemies."

Compare the laws given to the children of Israel, as it is claimed by the Creator of us all, with the following from Marcus Aurelius: "I have formed the ideal of a state, in which there is the same law for all, and equal rights, and equal liberty of speech established; an empire where nothing is honoured so much as the freedom of the citizen."

In the Avesta I find this: "I belong to five: to those who think good, to those who speak good, to those who do good, to those who hear, and to those who are pure."

"Which is the one prayer which in greatness, goodness, and beauty is worth all that is between heaven and earth, and between this earth and the stars? And he replied: To renounce all evil thoughts and words and works."

#### VII.

It is claimed by the Christian world that one of the great reasons for giving an inspired book to the Jews was that through them the world might learn that there is but one God. This piece of information has been supposed to be of infinite value. As a matter of fact, long before Moses was born, the Egyptians believed and taught that there was but one God—that is to say, that above all intelligences there was the one Supreme. They were guilty, too, of the same inconsistencies as modern Christians. They taught the doctrine of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Mother, and God the Son. God was frequently represented as father, mother, and babe. They also taught that the soul had a divine origin; that after death it was to be judged according to the deeds done in the body; that those who had done well passed into perpetual joy, and those who had done evil into endless pain. In this they agreed with the most approved divine of the nineteenth century. Women were the equals of men, and Egypt was often governed by queens. In this her government was

vastly better than the one established by God. The laws were administered by courts much like ours. In Egypt there was a system of schools that gave the son of poverty a chance of advancement, and the highest offices were open to the successful scholar. The Egyptian married one wife. The wife was called "the lady of the house." The women were not secluded. The people were not divided into castes. There was nothing to prevent the rise of able and intelligent Egyptians. But, like the Jehovah of the Jews, they made slaves of the captives of war.

The ancient Persians believed in one God; and women helped to found the Parsee religion. Nothing can exceed some of the maxims of Zoroaster. The Hindoos taught that above all, and over all, was one eternal Supreme. They had a code of laws. They understood the philosophy of evidence and of damages. They knew better than to teach the doctrine of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. They knew that when one man maimed another it was not to the interest of society to have that man maimed, thus burdening the people with two cripples, but that it was better to make the man who maimed the other work to support him. In India, upon the death of a father, the daughters received twice as much from the estate as the sons.

The Romans built temples to Truth, Faith, Valour, Concord, Modesty, and Charity, in which they offered sacrifices to the highest conceptions of human excellence. Women had rights; they presided in the temple; they officiated in holy offices; they guarded the sacred fires upon which the safety of Rome depended; and when Christ came the grandest figure in the known world was the Roman mother.

It will not do to say that some rude statue was made by an inspired sculptor, and that the Apollo of Belvidere, Venus de Milo, and the Gladiator were made by unaided men; that the daubs of the early ages were painted by divine

assistance, while the Raphaels, the Angelos, and the Rembrandts did what they did without the help of heaven. It will not do to say that the first hut was built by God, and the last palace by degraded man; that the hoarse songs of the savage tribes were made by the Deity, but that *Hamlet* and *Lear* were written by man; that the pipes of Pan were invented in heaven, and all other musical instruments on the earth.

If the Jehovah of the Jews had taken upon himself flesh and dwelt as a man among the people he endeavoured to govern—had he followed his own teachings, he would have been a slaveholder, a buyer of babies, and a beater of women. He would have waged wars of extermination. He would have killed grey-haired and trembling age, and would have sheathed his sword in prattling, dimpled babes. He would have been a polygamist, and would have butchered his wife for differing with him on the subject of religion.

#### VIII.—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

One great objection to the Old Testament is the cruelty said to have been commanded by God. All these cruelties ceased with death. The vengeance of Jehovah stopped at the tomb. He never threatened to punish the dead; and there is not one word, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse of Malachi, containing the slightest intimation that God will take his revenge in another world. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the doctrine of eternal pain. The teacher of universal benevolence rent the veil between time and eternity, and fixed the horrified gaze of man upon the lurid gulf of hell. Within the breast of non-resistance coiled the worm that never dies. Compared with this the doctrine of slavery, the wars of extermination, the curses, the punishments of the Old Testament, were all merciful and just.

There is no time to speak of the conflicting statements in the various books composing the New Testament—no time

to give the history of the manuscripts, the errors in translation, the interpolations made by the fathers and by their successors, the priests, and only time to speak of a few objections, including some absurdities and some contradictions.

Where several witnesses testify to the same transaction, no matter how honest they may be, they will disagree upon minor matters, and such testimony is generally considered as evidence that the witnesses have not conspired among themselves. The differences in statement are accounted for from the facts that all do not see alike, and that all have not equally good memories; but when we claim that the witnesses are inspired, we must admit that he who inspired them did know exactly what occurred, and, consequently, there should be no disagreement, even in the minutest detail. The accounts should not only be substantially, but they should be actually, the same. The differences and contradictions can be accounted for by the weaknesses of human nature; but these weaknesses cannot be predicated of divine wisdom.

And here let me ask: Why should there have been more than one correct account of what really happened? Why were four gospels necessary? It seems to me that one inspired gospel, containing all that happened, was enough. Copies of the one correct one could have been furnished to any extent. According to Dr. Davidson, Irenæus argues that the gospels were four in number, because there are four universal winds, four corners of the globe. Others have said, because there are four seasons; and these gentlemen might have added, because a donkey has four legs. For my part, I cannot even conceive of a reason for more than one gospel.

According to one of these gospels, and according to the prevalent Christian belief, the Christian religion rests upon the doctrine of the Atonement. If this doctrine is without foundation, the fabric falls; and it is without foundation, for it



is repugnant to justice and mercy. The Church tells us that the first man committed a crime for which all others are responsible. This absurdity was the father and mother of another—that a man can be rewarded for the good action of another. We are told that God made a law, with the penalty of eternal death. All men, they tell us, have broken this law. The law had to be vindicated. This could be done by damning everybody; but through what is known as the Atonement the salvation of a few was made possible. They insist that the law demands the extreme penalty; that justice calls for its victim; that mercy ceases to plead; and that God, by allowing the innocent to suffer in the place of the guilty, settled satisfactorily with the law. To carry out this scheme, God was born as a babe, grew in stature, increased in knowledge; and at the age of thirty-three years, having lived a life filled with kindness, having practised every virtue, he was sacrificed as an atonement for man. It is claimed that he took our place, bore our sins, our guilt, and in this way satisfied the justice of God.

Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sin except through the shedding of blood. When a man sinned he must bring to the priest a lamb, a bullock, a goat, or a pair of turtle-doves. The priest would lay his hand upon the animal, and the sin of the man would be transferred to the beast. Then the animal would be killed in place of the sinner, and the blood thus shed would be sprinkled upon the altar. In this way Jehovah was satisfied. The greater the crime, the greater the sacrifice. There was a ratio between the value of the animal and the enormity of the sin.

The most minute directions were given as to the killing of these animals. Every priest became a butcher, every synagogue a slaughter-house. Nothing could be more utterly shocking to a refined soul, nothing better calculated to harden the heart, than the continual shedding of innocent blood. This terrible system

culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is not necessary to shed any more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited.

The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery; and yet the Mosaic dispensation was better adapted to prevent the commission of sin than the Christian system. Under that dispensation, if you committed a sin, you had to bring a sacrifice—dove, sheep, or bullock; now, when a sin is committed, the Christian says: "Charge it." "Put it on the slate; if I don't pay it, the Saviour will." In this way, rascality is sold on a credit, and the credit system of religion breeds extravagance in sin. The Mosaic dispensation was based upon far better business principles. The debt had to be paid, and by the man who owed it. We are told that the sinner is in debt to God, and that the obligation is discharged by the Saviour. The best that can be said of such a transaction is that the debt is transferred, not paid. As a matter of fact, the sinner is in debt to the person he has injured. If you injure a man, it is not enough to get the forgiveness of God—you must get the man's forgiveness, you must get your own. If a man puts his hand in the fire and God forgives him, his hand will smart just as badly. You must reap what you sow. No God can give you wheat when you sow tares, and no Devil can give you tares when you sow wheat. We must remember that in nature there are neither rewards nor punishments—there are consequences. The life and death of Christ do not constitute an atonement. They are worth the example, the moral force, the heroism of benevolence, and, in so far as the life of Christ produces emulation in the direction of goodness, it has been of value to mankind.

To make innocence suffer is the greatest sin, and it may be the only sin. How, then, is it possible to make the consequences of sin an atonement for sin,

when the consequences of sin are to be borne by one who has not sinned, and the one who has sinned is to reap the reward of virtue? No honourable man should be willing that another should suffer for him. No good law can accept the sufferings of innocence as an atonement for the guilty; and, besides, if there was no atonement until the crucifixion of Christ, what became of the countless millions who died before that time? We must remember that the Jews did not kill animals for the Gentiles. Jehovah hated foreigners. There was no way provided for the forgiveness of a heathen. What has become of the millions who have died since, without having heard of the atonement? What becomes of those who hear, and do not believe? Can there be a law that demands that the guilty be rewarded? And yet to reward the guilty is far nearer justice than to punish the innocent. If the doctrine of the atonement is true, there would have been no heaven had no atonement been made.

If Judas had understood the Christian system, if he knew that Christ must be betrayed, that God was depending on him to betray him, and that without the betrayal no human soul could be saved, what should Judas have done?

Jehovah took special charge of the Jewish people. He did this for the purpose of civilising them. If he had succeeded in civilising them, he would have made the damnation of the entire human race a certainty; because if the Jews had been a civilised people when Christ appeared—a people who had not been hardened by the laws of Jehovah—they would not have crucified Christ, and, as a consequence, the world would have been lost. If the Jews had believed in religious freedom, in the rights of thought and speech; if the Christian religion is true, not a human soul ever could have been saved. If, when Christ was on his way to Calvary, some brave soul had rescued him from the pious mob, he would not only have been damned for his pains, but would have

rendered impossible the salvation of any human being.

The Christian world has been trying for nearly two thousand years to explain the atonement, and every effort has ended in an admission that it cannot be understood, and a declaration that it must be believed. Has the promise and hope of forgiveness ever prevented the commission of a sin? Can men be made better by being taught that sin gives happiness here; that to live a virtuous life is to bear a cross; that men can repent between the last sin and the last breath; and that repentance washes every stain of the soul away? Is it good to teach that the serpent of regret will not hiss in the ear of memory; that the saved will not even pity the victims of their crimes; and that sins forgiven cease to affect the unhappy wretches sinned against?

Another objection is that a certain belief is necessary to save the soul. This doctrine, I admit, is taught in the gospel according to John, and in many of the epistles; I deny that it is taught in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. It is, however, asserted by the Church that to believe is the only safe way. To this I reply: Belief is not a voluntary thing. A man believes or disbelieves in spite of himself. They tell us that to believe is the safe way; but I say the safe way is to be honest. Nothing can be safer than that. No man in the hour of death ever regretted having been honest. No man, when the shadows of the last day were gathering about the pillow of death, ever regretted that he had given to his fellow-man his honest thought. No man, in the presence of eternity, ever wished that he had been a hypocrite. No man ever then regretted that he did not throw away his reason. It certainly cannot be necessary to throw away your reason to save your soul, because after that your soul is not worth saving. The soul has a right to defend itself. My brain is my castle; and, when I waive the right to defend it, I become an intellectual serf and slave.



I do not admit that a man by doing me an injury can place me under obligations to do him a service. To render benefits for injuries is to ignore all distinctions between actions. He who treats friends and enemies alike has neither love nor justice. The idea of non-resistance never occurred to a man with power to defend himself. The mother of this doctrine was weakness. To allow a crime to be committed, even against yourself, when you can prevent it, is next to committing the crime yourself. The Church has preached the doctrine of non-resistance, and under that banner has shed the blood of millions. In the folds of her sacred vestments have gleamed for centuries the daggers of assassination. With her cunning hands she wove the purple for hypocrisy, and placed the crown upon the brow of crime. For more than a thousand years larceny held the scales of justice, hypocrisy wore the mitre and tiara, while beggars scorned the royal sons of toil, and ignorant fear denounced the liberty of thought.

#### IX.—CHRIST'S MISSION.

He came, they tell us, to make a revelation, and what did he reveal? "Love thy neighbour as thyself"? That was in the Old Testament. "Love God with all thy heart"? That was in the Old Testament. "Return good for evil"? That was said by Buddha seven hundred years before Christ was born. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"? That was the doctrine of Laotsze. Did he come to give a rule of action? Zoroaster had done this long before: "Whenever thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it." Did he come to tell us of another world? The immortality of the soul had been taught by the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans hundreds of years before he was born. What argument did he make in favour of immortality? What facts did he furnish? What star of hope did he put above the darkness of this world? Did

he come simply to tell us that we should not revenge ourselves upon our enemies. Long before, Socrates had said: "One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we have suffered from him." And Cicero had said: "Let us not listen to those who think we ought to be angry with our enemies, and who believe this to be great and manly. Nothing is so praiseworthy, nothing so clearly shows a great and noble soul, as clemency and readiness to forgive." Is there anything in the literature of the world more nearly perfect than this thought?

Was it from Christ the world learned the first lesson of forbearance, when centuries and centuries before Christna had said: "If a man strike thee, and in striking drop his staff, pick it up and hand it to him again"? Is it possible that the Son of God threatened to say to a vast majority of his children: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," while the Buddhist was great and tender enough to say: "Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation; never enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Never will I leave this world of sin and sorrow and struggle until all are delivered. Until then I will remain and suffer where I am"?

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this, from a Sufi?—"Better one moment of silent contemplation and inward love than seventy thousand years of outward worship."

Is there anything comparable to this?—"Whoever carelessly treads on a worm that crawls on the earth, that heartless one is darkly alienate from God."

Is there anything in the New Testament more beautiful than the story of the Sufi?

For seven years a Sufi practised every

virtue, and then he mounted the three steps that lead to the doors of paradise. He knocked, and a voice said: "Who is there?" The Sufi replied: "Thy servant, O God." But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi engaged in every good work. He comforted the sorrowing and divided his substance with the poor. Again he mounted the three steps, again knocked at the doors of Paradise, and again the voice asked: "Who is there?" and the Sufi replied: "Thy slave, O God." But the doors remained closed.

Yet seven other years the Sufi spent in works of charity, in visiting the imprisoned and the sick. Again he mounted the steps, again knocked at the celestial doors. Again he heard the question: "Who is there?" and he replied: "Thyself, O God." The gates wide open flew.

Is it possible that St. Paul was inspired of God when he said: "Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection"; "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man"?

And is it possible that Epictetus, without the slightest aid from heaven, gave to the world this gem of love: "What is more delightful than to be so dear to your wife as to be on that account dearer to yourself"?

Did St. Paul express the sentiments of God when he wrote: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord"?

And was the author of this a poor, despised heathen?—"In whatever house the husband is contented with the wife, and the wife with the husband, in that house will fortune dwell; but upon the house where women are not honoured, let a curse be pronounced. Where the wife is honoured, there the gods are truly worshipped."

Is there anything in the New Testament as beautiful as this?—"Shall I tell thee where nature is most blest and fair?

It is where those we love abide. Though that space be small, it is ample above kingdoms; though it be a desert, through it run the rivers of Paradise."

After reading the curses pronounced in the Old Testament upon Jew and heathen, the descriptions of slaughter, of treachery, and of death, the destruction of women and babes; after you shall have read all the chapters of horror in the New Testament, the threatenings of fire and flame, then read this, from the greatest of human beings:—

The quality of mercy is not strained:  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown.

#### X.—ETERNAL PAIN.

Upon passages in the New Testament rests the doctrine of eternal pain. This doctrine subverts every idea of justice. A finite being can commit neither an infinite sin nor a sin against the Infinite. A being of infinite goodness and wisdom has no right to create any being whose life is not a blessing. Infinite wisdom has no right to create a failure, and surely a man destined to everlasting failure is not a conspicuous success. The doctrine of eternal punishment is the most infamous of all doctrines—born of ignorance, cruelty, and fear. Around the angel of immortality Christianity has coiled this serpent.

Upon Love's breast the Church has placed the eternal asp. And yet in the same book in which is taught this most frightful of dogmas we are assured that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

A few days ago upon the wide sea was found a barque called *The Tiger*, Captain Kreuger in command. The vessel had been one hundred and twenty-six days upon the sea. For days the crew had been without water, without food, and were starving. For nine days not a drop had passed their lips. The crew consisted of the captain, a mate, and eleven men. At the end of one hundred and



eighteen days from Liverpool they killed the captain's Newfoundland dog. This lasted them four days. During the next five days they had nothing. For weeks they had had no light, and were unable to see the compass at night. On the one hundred and twenty-fifth day Captain Kreuger, a German, took a revolver in his hand, stood up before the men, and, placing the weapon at his temple, said: "Boys, we can't stand this much longer, and, to save you all, I am willing to die." The mate grasped the revolver, and begged the captain to wait another day. The next day, upon the horizon of their despair, they saw the smoke of the steamship *Nebo*. They were rescued.

Suppose that Captain Kreuger was not a Christian, and suppose that he had sent the ball crashing through his brain, and had done so simply to keep the crew from starvation, do you tell me that a God of infinite mercy would forever damn that man?

Do not misunderstand me. I insist that every passage in the Bible upholding crime was written by savage man. I insist that, if there is a God, he is not, never was, and never will be, in favour of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, or religious persecution. Does any Christian believe that, if the real God were to write a book now, he would uphold the crimes commanded in the Old Testament? Has Jehovah improved? Has infinite mercy become more merciful? Has infinite wisdom intellectually advanced?

# XI.

Will anyone claim, that the passages upholding slavery have liberated mankind? Are we indebted to polygamy for our modern homes? Was religious liberty born of that infamous verse in which the husband is commanded to kill his wife for worshipping an unknown God?

The usual answer to these objections is that no country has ever been civilised without a Bible. The Jews were the only people to whom Jehovah made his

will directly known. Were they better than other nations? They read the Old Testament, and one of the effects of such reading was that they crucified a kind, loving, and perfectly innocent man. Certainly they could not have done worse without a Bible. In crucifying Christ the Jews followed the teachings of his Father. If Jehovah was, in fact, God, and if that God took upon himself flesh and came among the Jews, and preached what the Jews understood to be blasphemy; and if the Jews, in accordance with the laws given by this same Jehovah to Moses, crucified him, then I say, and I say it with infinite reverence, he reaped what he had sown. He became the victim of his own injustice.

But I insist that these things are not true. I insist that the real God, if there is one, never commanded man to enslave his fellow-man, never told a mother to sell her babe, never established polygamy, never urged one nation to exterminate another, and never told a husband to kill his wife because she suggested the worship of another God.

From the aspersions of the pulpit, from the slanders of the Church, I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity. I insist that the Old Testament would be a better book with all these passages left out; and, whatever may be said of the rest of the Bible, the passages to which I have called attention can, with vastly more propriety, be attributed to a devil than to a God.

Take from the New Testament the idea that belief is necessary to salvation; that Christ was offered as an atonement for the sins of mankind; that heaven is the reward of faith, and hell the penalty of honest investigation, and that the punishment of the human soul will go on forever; take from it all miracles and foolish stories, and I most cheerfully admit that the good passages are true. If they are true, it makes no difference whether they are inspired or not. Inspiration is only necessary to give authority to that which is repugnant to

human reason. Only that which never happened needs to be substantiated by a miracle.

The universe is natural.

The Church must cease to insist that passages upholding the institutions of savage men were inspired of God. The dogma of atonement must be abandoned. Good deeds must take the place of faith. The savagery of eternal punishment must be renounced. It must be admitted that credulity is not a virtue, and that investigation is not a crime. It must be admitted that miracles are the children of mendacity, and that nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, unbroken, sublime, and eternal procession of causes and effects. Reason must be the arbiter. Inspired books attested by miracles cannot stand against a demonstrated fact. A religion that does not command the respect of the greatest minds will, in a little while, excite the mockery of all.

A man who does not believe in intellectual liberty is a barbarian. Is it possible that God is intolerant? Could there be any progress, even in heaven, without intellectual liberty? Is the freedom of the future to exist only in perdition? Is it not, after all, barely possible that a man acting like Christ can be saved? Is a man to be eternally rewarded for believing according to evidence, without evidence, or against evidence? Are we to be saved because we are good, or because another was virtuous? Is credulity to be winged and crowned, while honest doubt is chained and damned?

If Jehovah was, in fact, God, he knew the end from the beginning. He knew that his Bible would be a breast-work

behind which all tyranny and hypocrisy would crouch. He knew that his Bible would be the auction-block on which women would stand while their babes were sold from their arms. He knew that this Bible would be quoted by tyrants; that it would be the defence of robbers called kings, and of hypocrites called priests. He knew that he had taught the Jewish people nothing of importance. He knew that he had found them free and left them slaves. He knew that he had never fulfilled a single promise made to them. He knew that, while other nations had advanced in art and science, his chosen people were savage still. He promised them the world, and gave them a desert. He promised them liberty, and he made them slaves. He promised them victory, and he gave them defeat. He said they should be kings, and he made them serfs. He promised them universal empire, and gave them exile. When one finishes the Old Testament he is compelled to say: "Nothing can add to the misery of a nation whose king is Jehovah!"

The Old Testament filled this world with tyranny and injustice, and the New gives us a future filled with pain for nearly all of the sons of men.

The Old Testament describes the hell of the past, and the New the hell of the future.

The Old Testament tells us the frightful things that God has done, the New the frightful things that he will do.

These two books give us the sufferings of the past and the future—the injustice, the agony, and the tears of both worlds.

## PROGRESS

I AM aware that the subject chosen by me is almost infinite, and that in its broadest sense it is absolutely beyond the present comprehension of man.

I am also aware that there are many opinions as to what progress really is; that what one calls progress another denominates barbarism; that many have a wonderful veneration for all that is ancient, merely because it is ancient, and see no beauty in anything from which they do not have to blow the dust of ages with the breath of praise.

They say no masters like the old; no governments like the ancient; no orators, no poets, no statesmen like those who have been dust for two thousand years. Others despise antiquity, and admire only the modern, merely because it is modern. They find so much to condemn in the past that they condemn all. I hope, however, that I have gratitude enough to acknowledge the obligations I am under to the great and heroic minds of antiquity, that I have manliness and independence enough not to believe what they said merely because they said it, and that I have moral courage enough to advocate ideas, however modern they may be, if I believe that they are right. Truth is neither young nor old, is neither ancient nor modern; but is the same for all times and places, and should be sought for with ceaseless activity, eagerly acknowledged, loved more than life, and abandoned—never. In accordance with the idea that labour is the basis of all prosperity and happiness is another idea or truth, and that is that labour, in order to make the labourer and the world at large happy, must be free; that the labourer must be a free man, the thinker must be free. I do not intend in what I may say upon this subject to carry you back to the remotest antiquity—back to Asia, the cradle of the world, where we

could stand in the ashes and ruins of a civilisation so old that history has not recorded even its decay. It will answer my present purpose to commence with the Middle Ages. In those times there was no freedom of either mind or body in Europe. Labour was despised, and a labourer was considered as scarcely above the beasts. Ignorance like a mantle covered the world, and superstition ran riot with the human imagination. The air was filled with angels, demons, and monsters. Everything assumed the air of the miraculous. Credulity occupied the throne of reason, and faith put out the eyes of the soul. A man to be distinguished had either to be a soldier or a monk. He could take his choice between killing and lying. You must remember that in those days nations carried on war as an end, not as a means. War and theology were the business of mankind. No man could win more than a bare existence by industry, much less fame and glory. Comparatively speaking, there was no commerce. Nations, instead of buying and selling from and to each other, took what they wanted by brute force. And every Christian country maintained that it was no robbery to take the property of Mohammedans, and no murder to kill the owners with or without just cause of quarrel. Lord Bacon was the first man of note who maintained that a Christian country was bound to keep its plighted faith with an infidel one. In those days reading and writing were considered very dangerous arts, and any layman who had acquired the art of reading was suspected of being a heretic or a wizard.

It is almost impossible for us to conceive of the ignorance, the cruelty, the superstition, and the mental blindness of that period. In reading the history of those dark and bloody years I am



amazed at the wickedness, the folly, and presumption of mankind. And yet the solution of the whole matter is they despised liberty, they hated freedom of mind and of body. They forged chains of superstition for the one, and of iron for the other. They were ruled by that terrible trinity—the cowl, the sword, and the chain.

You cannot form a correct opinion of those ages without reading the standard authors, so to speak, of that time, the laws then in force, and by ascertaining the habits and customs of the people, their mode of administering the laws, and the ideas that were commonly received as correct. No one believed that honest error could be innocent; no one dreamed of such a thing as religious freedom. In the fifteenth century the following law was in force in England: "That whatsoever they were that should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods from their heirs for ever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land." The next year after this law was in force, in one day thirty-nine were hanged for its violation and their bodies afterwards burned.

Laws equally unjust, bloody, and cruel were in force in all parts of Europe. In the sixteenth century a man was burned in France because he refused to kneel to a procession of dirty monks. I could enumerate thousands of instances of the most horrid cruelty perpetrated upon men, women, and even little children, for no other reason in the world than a difference of opinion upon a subject that neither party knew anything about; but you are all, no doubt, perfectly familiar with the history of religious persecution.

There is one thing, however, that is strange indeed, and that is that the reformers of those days, the men who rose against the horrid tyranny of the times, the moment they attained power persecuted with a zeal and bitterness never excelled. Luther, one of the

grand men of the world, cast in the heroic mould, although he gave utterance to the following sublime sentiment: "Everyone has the right to read for himself that he may prepare himself to live and to die," still had no idea of what we call religious freedom. He considered universal toleration an error; so did Melancthon and Erasmus, and yet, strange as it may appear, they were exercising the very right they denied to others, and maintaining their right with a courage and energy absolutely sublime.

John Knox was only in favour of religious freedom when he was in the minority, and Baxter entertained the same sentiment. Castalio, a professor at Geneva, in Switzerland, was the first clergyman in Europe who declared the innocence of honest error, and who proclaimed himself in favour of universal toleration. The name of this man should never be forgotten. He had the goodness, the courage, although surrounded with prisons and inquisitions, and in the midst of millions of fierce bigots, to declare the innocence of honest error, and that every man had a right to worship the good God in his own way.

For the utterance of this sublime sentiment his professorship was taken from him; he was driven from Geneva by John Calvin and his adherents, although he had belonged to their sect.

He was denounced as a child of the devil, a dog of Satan, as a murderer of souls, as a corrupter of the faith, and as one who by his doctrines crucified the Saviour afresh. Not content with merely driving him from his home, they pursued him absolutely to the grave with a malignity that increased rather than diminished. You must not think that Calvin was alone in this; on the contrary, he was fully sustained by public opinion, and would have been sustained even though he had procured the burning of the noble Castalio at the stake. I cite this instance not merely for the purpose of casting odium upon Calvin, but to show you what public opinion was at that time, when such things were ordinary



transactions. Bodinus, a lawyer in France, about the same time advocated something like religious liberty; but public opinion was overwhelmingly against him, and the people were at all times ready with torch and brand, chain and fagot, to get the abominable heresy out of the human mind that a man had a right to think for himself. And yet Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Baxter, in spite, as it were, of themselves, conferred a great and lasting benefit upon mankind, for what they did was at least in favour of individual judgment; and one successful stand against the Church produced others, all of which tended to establish universal toleration. In those times you will remember that, failing to convert a man or woman by the ordinary means, they resorted to every engine of torture that the ingenuity of bigotry could devise. They crushed their feet in what they called iron boots, they roasted them upon slow fires, they plucked out their nails, and then into the bleeding quick thrust needles. And all this to convince them of the truth. I suppose that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. Montaigne was the first man who raised his voice against torture in France—a man blessed with so much common sense that he was the most uncommon man of the age in which he lived. But what was one voice against the terrible cry of ignorant millions—a drowning man in the wild roar of the infinite sea. It is impossible to read the history of the long and seemingly hopeless war waged for religious freedom without being filled with horror and disgust. Millions of men, women, and children, at least one hundred millions of human beings with hopes and loves and aspirations like ourselves, have been sacrificed upon the altar of bigotry. They have perished at the stake, in prisons, by famine, and by sword; they have died wandering homeless in deserts, groping in caves, until their blood cried from the earth for vengeance. But the principle, gathering strength from their weakness, nourished by blood and flame,

rendered holier still by their sufferings, grander by their heroism, and immortal by their death, triumphed at last, and is now acknowledged by the whole civilised world. Enormous as the cost has been, the principle is worth a thousand times as much. There must be freedom in religion, for without freedom there can be no real religion. And as for myself, I glory in the fact that upon American soil that principle was first firmly established, and that the Constitution of the United States was the first of any great nation in which religious toleration was made one of the fundamental laws of the land; and it is not only the law of our country, but the law is sustained by an enlightened public opinion. Without liberty there is no religion, no worship; what light is to the eyes, what air is to the lungs, what love is to the heart, liberty is to the soul of man. Without liberty the brain is a dungeon, where the chained thoughts die with their pinions pressed against the hingeless doors.

#### "WITCHCRAFT."

The next fact to which I call your attention is that during the Middle Ages the people, the whole people, the learned and the ignorant, the masters and the slaves, the clergy, the lawyers, doctors, and statesmen, all believed in witchcraft—in the evil eye, and that the devil entered into people, into animals, and even into insects to accomplish his dark designs. And all the people believed it their solemn duty to thwart the devil by all means in their power, and they accordingly set themselves at work hanging and burning everybody suspected of being in league with the Enemy of mankind. If you grant their premises, you justify their actions. If these persons had actually entered into partnership with the devil for the purpose of injuring their neighbours, the people would have been justified in exterminating them all. And the crime of witchcraft was proven over and over again in court after court in every town

of Europe. Thousands of people who were charged with being in league with the devil confessed the crime ; gave all the particulars of the bargain ; told just what the devil said, and what they replied, and exactly how the bargain was consummated ; admitted in the presence of death, on the very edge of the grave, when they knew that the confession would confiscate all their property and leave their children homeless wanderers, and render their own names infamous after death.

We can account for a man suffering death for what he believes to be right. He knows that he has the sympathy of all the truly good, and he hopes that his name will be gratefully remembered in the far future, and, above all, he hopes to win the approval of a just God. But the man who confessed himself guilty of being a wizard knew that his memory would be execrated, and expected that his soul would be eternally lost. What motive could, then, have induced so many to confess ? Strange as it is, I believe that they actually believed themselves guilty. They considered their case hopeless ; they confessed and died without a prayer. These things are enough to make one think that sometimes the world becomes insane, and that the earth is a vast asylum without a keeper. I repeat that I am convinced that the people that confessed themselves guilty believed that they were so. In the first place, they believed in witchcraft, and that people often were possessed of Satan ; and when they were accused, the fright and consternation produced by the accusation in connection with their belief often produced insanity, or something akin to it ; and the poor creatures, charged with a crime that it was impossible to disprove, deserted and abhorred by their friends, left alone with their superstitions and fears, driven to despair, looked upon death as a blessed relief from a torture that you and I cannot at this day understand. People were charged with the most impossible crimes. In the time of James the First a man

was burned in Scotland for having produced a storm at sea for the purpose of drowning one of the royal family. A woman was tried before Sir Matthew Hale, one of the most learned and celebrated lawyers of England, for having caused children to vomit crooked pins. She was also charged with nursing demons. Of course, she was found guilty, and the learned judge charged the jury that there was no doubt as to the existence of witches—that all history, sacred and profane, and the experience of every country, proved it beyond any manner of doubt. And the woman was either hanged or burned for a crime for which it was impossible for her to be guilty. In those times they also believed in Lycanthropy—that is, that persons of whom the devil had taken possession could assume the appearance of wolves.

One instance is related where a man was attacked by what appeared to be a wolf. He defended himself, and succeeded in cutting off one of the wolf's paws ; whereupon the wolf ran, and the man picked up the paw, and, putting it in his pocket, went home. When he took the paw out of his pocket it had changed to a human hand, and his wife sat in the house with one of her hands gone and the stump of her arm bleeding. He denounced his wife as a witch ; she confessed the crime, and was burned at the stake. People were burned for causing frosts in the summer, for destroying crops with hail, for causing cows to become dry, and even for souring beer. The life of no one was secure ; malicious enemies had only to charge one with witchcraft, prove a few odd sayings and queer actions, to secure the death of their victim. And this belief in witchcraft was so intense that to express a doubt upon the subject was to be suspected, and probably executed. Believing that animals were also taken possession of by evil spirits, and also believing that if they killed an animal containing one of the evil spirits they caused the death of the spirit, they absolutely tried animals, convicted and executed



them. At Basle, in 1474, a rooster was tried, charged with having laid an egg, and, as rooster eggs were used only in making witch ointment, it was a serious charge; and everyone of course admitted that the devil must have been the cause, as roosters could not very well lay eggs without some help. And the egg having been produced in court, the rooster was duly convicted, and he, together with his miraculous egg, were publicly, and with all due solemnity, burned in the public square. So a hog and six pigs were tried for having killed and partially eaten a child. The hog was convicted and executed, but the pigs were acquitted on the ground of their extreme youth. As late as 1740 a cow was absolutely tried on a charge of being possessed of the devil. Our forefathers used to rid themselves of rats, leeches, locusts, and vermin by pronouncing what they called a public exorcism.

On some occasions animals were received as witnesses in judicial proceedings.

The law was in some of the countries of Europe that if a man's house was broken into between sunset and sunrise, and the owner killed the intruder, it should be considered justifiable homicide.

But it was also considered that it was just possible that a man living alone might entice another to his house in the night time, kill him, and then pretend that his victim was a robber. In order to prevent this, it was enacted that when a person was killed by a man living alone, and under such circumstances, the solitary householder should not be held innocent unless he produced in court some animal, a dog or a cat, that had been an inmate of the house, and had witnessed the death of the person killed. The prisoner was then compelled in the presence of such animal to make a solemn declaration of his innocence, and, if the animal failed to contradict him, he was declared guiltless, the law taking it for granted that the Deity would cause a miraculous manifestation by a dumb animal rather

than allow a murderer to escape. It was the law in England that any one convicted of a crime could appeal to what was called *corsned* or morsel of execration. This was a piece of cheese or bread of about an ounce in weight, which was first consecrated with a form of exorcism desiring that the Almighty, if the man were guilty, would cause convulsions and paleness, and that it might stick in his throat; but that it might, if the man were innocent, turn to health and nourishment. Godwin, the Earl of Kent, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, appealed to the *corsned*, which, sticking in his throat, produced death. There were also trials by water and by fire. Persons were made to handle red-hot iron, and if it burned them their guilt was established; so their hands and feet were tied, and they were thrown into the water, and if they sank they were pronounced guilty, and allowed to drown. I give these instances to show you what has happened, and what always will happen, in countries where ignorance prevails and people abandon the great standard of reason. And also to show to you that scarcely any man, however great, can free himself of the superstitions of his time. Kepler, one of the greatest men of the world, and an astronomer second to none, although he plucked from the stars the secrets of the universe, was an *astologer*, and thought he could predict the career of any man by finding what star was in the ascendant at his birth. This infinitely foolish stuff was religiously believed by him merely because he had been raised in an atmosphere of boundless credulity. Tycho Brahe, another astronomer who has been, and is, called the prince of astronomers, not only believed in astrology, but actually kept an idiot in his service, whose disconnected and meaningless words he carefully wrote down, and then put them together in such a manner as to make prophecies; and then he patiently and confidently awaited their fulfilment.

Luther believed that he had actually



seen the devil not only, but that he had had discussions with him upon points of theology. On one occasion, getting excited, he threw an inkstand at his Majesty's head, and the ink-stain is still to be seen on the wall where the stand was broken. The devil, I believe, was untouched; he probably, having an inkling of Luther's intention, made a successful dodge.

In the time of Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, Stœffler, a noted mathematician and astronomer, a man of great learning, made an astronomical calculation according to the great Science of Astrology, and ascertained that the world was to be visited by another deluge. This prediction was absolutely believed by the leading men of the Empire not only, but of all Europe. The Commissioner General of the Army of Charles the Fifth recommended that a survey be made of the country by competent men in order to find out the highest land. But as it was uncertain how high the water would rise, this idea was abandoned.

Thousands of people left their homes in low lands, by the rivers, and near the sea, and sought the more elevated ground. Immense suffering was produced. People in some instances abandoned the aged, the sick, and the infirm to the tender mercies of the expected flood, so anxious were they to reach some place of security.

At Toulouse, in France, the people absolutely built an ark, and stocked it with provisions; and it was not till long after the day upon which the flood was to have come had passed that the people recovered from their fright and returned to their homes. About the same time it was currently reported and believed that a child had been born in Silesia with a golden tooth. The people were again filled with wonder and consternation. They were satisfied that some great evil was coming upon mankind. At last it was solved by some chapter in Daniel wherein is predicted somebody with a golden head. Such stories would never

have gained credence only for the reason that the supernatural was expected. Anything in the ordinary course of nature was not worth telling. The human mind was in chains; it had been deformed by slavery. The reason was a trembling coward, and every production of the mind was deformed, every idea was a monster. Almost every law was unjust. Their religion was nothing more nor less than monsters worshipping an imaginary monster. Science could not, properly speaking, exist. Their histories were the grossest and most palpable falsehoods, and they filled all Europe with the most shocking absurdities. The histories were all written by the monks and bishops, all of whom were intensely superstitious and equally dishonest. Everything they did was a pious fraud. They wrote as though they had been eye-witnesses of every occurrence that they related. They entertained, and consequently expressed, no doubt as to any particular; and in case of any difficulty they always had a few miracles ready just suited for the occasion, and the people never for an instant doubted the absolute truth of every statement that they made. They wrote the history of every country of any importance. They related all the past and present, and predicted nearly all the future with an ignorant impudence actually sublime. They traced the order of St. Michael in France back to the Archangel himself, and alleged that he was the founder of a chivalric order in heaven itself. They also said that the Tartars originally came from Hell, and that they were called Tartars because Tartarus was one of the names of Perdition. They declared that Scotland was so called after Scota, a daughter of Pharaoh, who landed in Ireland, and afterwards invaded Scotland and took it by force of arms. This statement was made in a letter addressed to the Pope in the fourteenth century, and was alluded to as a well-known fact. The letter was written by some of the highest dignitaries of the Church, and by direction of the king himself. Matthew,

of Paris, an eminent historian of the fourteenth century, gave the world the following piece of valuable information: "It is well known that Mohammed originally was Cardinal, and became a heretic because he failed in his design of being elected Pope."

The same gentleman informs us that Mohammed, having drank to excess, fell drunk by the roadside, and in that condition was killed by pigs; and this is the reason, says he, that his followers abhor pork even unto this day. Another historian of about the same period tells us that one of the Popes cut off his hand because it had been kissed by an improper person, and that the hand was still in the Lateran at Rome, where it had been miraculously preserved from corruption for over five hundred years. After that occurrence, says he, the Pope's toe was substituted, which accounts for this practice. He also has the goodness to inform his readers that Nero was in the habit of vomiting frogs. Some of the croakers of the present day against progress would, I think, be the better of such a vomit. The history of Charlemagne was written by Turpin, the Archbishop of Rheims, and received the formal approbation of the Pope. In this it is asserted that the walls of a city fell down in answer to prayer; that Charlemagne was opposed by a giant called Fenacute, who was a descendant of the ancient Goliath; that forty men were sent to attack this giant, and that he took them under his arms and quietly carried them away. At length Orlando engaged him singly. Not meeting with the success that he anticipated, he changed his tactics and commenced a theological discussion. Warming with his subject, he pressed forward and suddenly stabbed his opponent, inflicting a mortal wound. After the death of the giant, Charlemagne easily conquered the whole country, and divided it among his sons.

The history of the Britons, written by the Archdeacons of Monmouth and Oxford, was immensely popular. Accord-

ing to their account, Brutus, a Roman, conquered England, built London, and called the country Britain, after himself. During his time it rained blood for three days. At another time a monster came from the sea, and, after having devoured a great many common people, finally swallowed the king himself. They say that King Arthur was not born like ordinary mortals, but was formed by a magical contrivance made by a wizard; that he was particularly lucky in killing giants; that he killed one in France who used to eat several people every day, and that this giant was clothed with garments made entirely of the beards of kings that he had killed and eaten. To cap the climax, one of the authors of this book was promoted for having written an authentic history of his country. Another writer of the fifteenth century says that, after Ignatius was dead, they found impressed upon his heart the Greek word "Theos." In all historical compositions there was an incredible want of common honesty. The great historian Eusebius ingenuously remarks that in his history he omitted whatever tended to discredit the Church, and magnified whatever conduced to her glory. The same glorious principle was adhered to by nearly, if not all, of the writers of those days. They wrote, and the people believed, that the tracks of Pharaoh's chariot wheels were still impressed upon the sands of the Red Sea, and could not be obliterated either by the winds or waves.

The next subject to which I call your attention is the wonderful progress in the mechanical arts. Animals use the weapons nature has furnished, and those only—the beak, the claw, the tusk, the teeth. The barbarian uses a club, a stone. As man advances, he makes tools with which to fashion his weapons. He discovers the best material to be used in their construction. He next finds some power to assist him—that is to say, the weight of falling water or the force of the wind. He then creates a force, so to speak, by changing water to steam,



and with that he impels machines that can do almost everything but think. You will observe that the ingenuity of man is first exercised in the construction of weapons. There were splendid Damascus blades when ploughing was done with a crooked stick. There were complete suits of armour on backs that had never felt a shirt. The world was full of inventions to destroy life before there were any to prolong it or make it endurable. Murder was always a science—medicine is not one yet. Scalping was known and practised long before Barret discovered the hair regenerator. The destroyers have always been honoured; the useful have always been despised. In ancient times agriculture was known only to slaves. The low, the ignorant, the contemptible, cultivated the soil. To work was to be nobody. Mechanics were only one degree above the farmer. In short, labour was disgraceful. Idleness was the badge of gentle blood. The fields, being poorly cultivated, produced but little at the best. Only a few kinds of crops were raised. The result was frequent famine and constant suffering. One country could not be supplied from another, as now. The roads were always horrible. And, besides all this, every country was at war with nearly every other. This state of things lasted until a few years ago.

Let me show you the condition of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At that time London was the most populous capital in Europe; yet it was dirty, ill built, without any sanitary provisions whatever. The deaths were one in twenty-three each year. Now, in a much more crowded population, they are not one in forty. Much of the country was then heath and swamp. Almost within sight of London there was a tract, twenty-five miles round, almost in a state of nature. There were but three houses upon it. In the rainy season the roads were almost impassable. Through gullies filled with mud, carriages were dragged with oxen. Between places of great

importance the roads were little known, and a principal mode of transport was by pack horses, of which passengers took advantage by stowing themselves away between the packs. The usual charge for freight was thirty cents per ton a mile. After a while, what they were pleased to call flying coaches were established. They could move from thirty to fifty miles a day. Many persons thought the risk so great that it was tempting Providence to get into one of them. The mail bag was carried on horseback at five miles an hour. A penny post had been established in the city; but many long-headed men, who knew what they were saying, denounced it as a popish contrivance. Only a few years before Parliament had resolved that all pictures in the royal collection which contained representations of Jesus or the Virgin Mary should be burned; Greek statues were handed over to Puritan stonemasons to be made decent. Lewis Muggleton had given himself out as the last and the greatest of the prophets, having power to save or damn. He had also discovered that God was only six feet high, and the sun four miles off. There were people in England as savage as our Indians. The women, half naked, would chant some wild measure, while the men would brandish their dirks and dance. There were thirty-four counties without a printer. Social discipline was wretched. The master flogged his apprentice, the pedagogue his scholar, the husband his wife, and I am ashamed to say that whipping has not been abolished in our schools. It is a relic of barbarism, and should not be tolerated one moment. It is brutal, low, and contemptible. The teacher that administers such punishment is no more to blame than the parents that allow it. Every gentleman and lady should use his or her influence to do away with this vile and infamous practice. In those days public punishments were all brutal. Men and women were put in the pillory, and then pelted with brick-bats, rotten eggs, and dead cats by the



rabble. The whipping-post was then an institution in England, as it is now in the enlightened State of Delaware. Criminals were drawn and quartered; others were disembowelled and hung, and their bodies suspended in chains to rot in the air. The houses of the people in the country were huts, thatched with straw. Anybody who could get fresh meat once a week was considered rich. Children of six years old had to labour. In London the houses were of wood or plaster, the streets filthy beyond expression, even muddier than Bloomington is now. After nightfall a passenger went about at his peril, for chamber windows were opened and slop pails unceremoniously emptied. There were no lamps in the streets, but plenty of highwaymen and robbers.

The morals of the people corresponded, as they generally do, with their physical condition. It is said that the clergy did what they could to make the people pious, but they could not accomplish much. You cannot convert a man when he is hungry—he will not accept better doctrines until he gets better clothes, and he won't have more faith till he gets more food. Besides this, the clergy were a little below par, so much so that Queen Elizabeth issued an order that no clergyman should presume to marry a servant girl without the consent of her master or mistress. During the same time the condition of France, and, indeed, of all Europe, was even worse than England. What has changed the condition of Great Britain more than any and everything else? The inventions of her mechanics. The old moral method was, and always will be, a failure. If you wish to better the condition of a people morally, better them physically. About the close of the eighteenth century Watt, Arkwright, Hargreave, Crompton, Cartwright, invented the steam engine, the spring frame, the jenny, the mule, the power loom, the carding machine, and a hundred other minor inventions, and put it in the power of England to monopolise the markets of the world.

Her machinery soon became equal to 30,000,000 of men. In a few years the population was doubled and the wealth quadrupled, and England became the first nation of the world, through her inventors, her merchants, her mechanics, and in spite of her statesmen, her priests, and her nobles. England began to spin for the world, cotton began to be universally worn, clean shirts began to be seen. The most cunning spinners of India could make a thread over 100 miles long from one pound of cotton. The machines of England have produced one over 1,000 miles in length from the same quantity. In a short time Stephenson invented the locomotive—railroads began to be built. Fulton gave to the world the steamboat, and commerce became independent of the winds. There are already railroads enough in the United States to make a double track around the world. Man has lengthened his arms. He reaches to every country, and takes what he wants; the world is before him—he helps himself. There can be no more famine. If there is no food in this country, the boat and the car will bring it from another.

We can have the luxuries of every climate. A majority of the people now live better than the king used to. Poor Solomon with his thousand wives, and no carpets; his great temple, and no gaslight. A thousand women, and not a pin in the house; no stoves, no cooking range, no baking powder, no potatoes—think of it. Dinner without potatoes. Plenty of wisdom and old saws, but no green corn; never heard of succotash in his whole life. No clean clothes, no music—if you except a *Jew's*-harp—no ice-water, no skates, no carriages, because there was not a decent road in all his dominions. Plenty of theology, but no tobacco, no books, no pictures; not a picture in all Palestine, not a piece of statuary, not a plough that would scour. No tea, no coffee. He never heard of any place of amusement; never was at a theatre, nor a circus. "Seven up" was then unknown to the

world. He couldn't even play billiards, with all his knowledge; never had an idea of woman's rights or universal suffrage; never went to school a day in his life, and cared no more about the will of the people than Andy Johnson.

The inventors have helped more than any other class to make the world what it is: the workers and the thinkers, the poor and the grand; labour and learning, industry and intelligence, Watt and Descartes, Fulton and Montaigne, Stephenson and Kepler, Crompton and Comte, Franklin and Voltaire, Morse and Buckle, Draper and Spencer, and hundreds more that I could mention. The inventors, the workers, the thinkers, the mechanics, the surgeons, the philosophers—these are the Atlases upon whose shoulders rests the great fabric of modern civilisation.

#### LANGUAGE.

In order to show you that the most abject superstition pervaded every department of human knowledge, or of ignorance rather, allow me to give you a few of their ideas upon language. It was universally believed that all languages could be traced back to the Hebrew; that the Hebrew was the original language, and every fact inconsistent with that idea was discarded. In consequence of this belief, all efforts to investigate the science of language were utterly fruitless. After a time, the Hebrew idea falling into disrepute, other languages claimed the honour of being the original ones.

André Kempe published a work in 1569 on the language of Paradise, in which he maintained that God spoke to Adam in Swedish, that Adam answered in Danish, and that the serpent (which appears quite probable) spoke to Eve in French. Erro, in a book published at Madrid, took the ground that Basque was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden. But in 1580 Goropius published his celebrated work at Antwerp, in which he put the whole matter at rest by proving that the language spoken in

Paradise was nothing more or less than plain Holland Dutch. The real founder of the present science of language was a German, Leibnitz—a contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton. He discarded the idea that all language could be traced to an original one, and held that language was, so to speak, a natural growth. Actual experience teaches us that this must be true. The ancient sages of Egypt had a vocabulary, according to Bunsen, of only about six hundred and eighty-five words, exclusive of proper names.

The English language has at least one hundred thousand.

#### GEOGRAPHY.

In the sixth century a monk by the name of Cosmas wrote a kind of orthodox geography and astronomy combined. He pretended that it was all in accordance with the Bible. According to him, the world was composed first of a flat piece of land and circular; this piece of land was entirely surrounded by water, which was the ocean; and beyond the strip of water was another circle of land. He believed that this outside circle was the land inhabited by the old world before the flood; that Noah crossed the strip of water, and landed on the central piece where we now are; that on the outside land was a high mountain around which the sun and moon revolved; that when the sun was behind the mountain it was night, and when on the side next us it was day. He also taught that on the outer edge of the outside circle of land the firmament or sky was fastened; that it was made of some solid material, and turned over the world like an immense kettle. And it was declared at that time that those who believed either more or less on that subject than that book contained were heretics, and deserved to be exterminated from the face of the earth. This was authority until the discovery of America by Columbus. Cosmas said the earth is flat; if it was round, how could men on the other side at the day of judgment see the coming of the Lord? At the



risk of being tiresome, I have said what I have to show you the productions of the mind when enslaved, the consequences of abandoning judgment and reason, the effects of widespread ignorance and universal bigotry.

I want to convince you that every wrong is a viper that will sooner or later strike with poisoned fangs the bosom that nourishes it. You will ask what has produced this wonderful change in only three hundred years. You will remember that in those days it was said that all ghosts vanished at the dawn of day; that the sprites, the spooks, the hobgoblins, and all the monsters of the imagination, fled from the approaching sun. In 1441 printing was invented. In the next century it became a power, and it has been flooding the world with light from that time to this. The Press has been the true Prometheus.

It has been, so to speak, the trumpet blown by the Gabriel of Progress, until, from the graves of ignorance and superstition, the people have leaped to grand and glorious life, spurning with swift feet the dust of an infamous past.

When people read, they reason; when they reason, they progress. You must not think that the enemies of progress allowed books to be published or read when they had the power to prevent it. The whole power of the Church, of the Government, was arrayed upon the side of ignorance. People found in the possession of books were often executed. Printing, reading, and writing were crimes. Anathemas were hurled from the Vatican against all who dared to publish a word in favour of liberty or the sacred rights of man. The Inquisition was founded on purpose to crush out every noble aspiration of the heart. It was a war of darkness against light, of slavery against liberty, of superstition against reason. I shall not attempt to recount the horrors and tortures of the Inquisition. Suffice it to say that they were equal to the most terrible and vivid pictures even of Hell, and the Inquisitors were even more horrid fiends than even

a real Perdition could boast. But in spite of priests, in spite of kings, in spite of mitres, in spite of crowns, in spite of cardinals and popes, books were published and books were read. Beam after beam of light penetrated the darkness. Star after star arose in the firmament of ignorance. The morning of freedom began to dawn. Driven to madness by the prospect of ultimate defeat, the enemies of light persecuted with redoubled fury.

People were burned for saying that the earth was round; for saying that the sun was the centre of a system. A woman was executed because she endeavoured to allay the pains of a fever by singing. The very name of philosopher became a title of proscription, and the slightest offences were punished by death. About the beginning of the sixteenth century Luther and Jerome of Prague, inaugurated the great Reformation in Germany, Ziska was at work in Hungary, Zwinglius in Switzerland. The grand work went forward in Denmark, in Sweden, and in England. All this was accomplished as early as 1534. They unmasked the corruption and withstood the tyranny of the Church.

With a zeal amounting to enthusiasm, with a courage that was heroic, with an energy that never flagged, a determination that brooked no opposition, with a firmness that defied torture and death, this sublime band of reformers sprang to the attack. Stronghold after stronghold was carried, and in a few short but terrible years the banner of the Reformation waved in triumph over the bloody ensign of Saint Peter. The soul, roused from the slumbers of a thousand years, began to think. When slaves begin to reason slavery begins to die. The invention of powder had released millions from the army, and left them to prosecute the arts of peace. Industry began to be remunerative and respectable.

Science began to unfold the wings that will finally fill the heavens. Descartes announced to the world the sublime truth that the universe was governed by law.



Commerce began to unfold her wings. People of different countries began to get acquainted. Christians found that Mohammedan gold was not the less valuable on account of the doctrines of its owners. Telescopes began to be pointed towards the stars. The universe was getting immense. The earth was growing small. It was discovered that a man could be healthy without being a Catholic. Innumerable agencies were at work dispelling darkness and creating light. The supernatural began to be abandoned, and mankind endeavoured to account for all physical phenomena by physical laws. The light of reason was irradiating the world; and from that light, as from the approach of the sun, the ghosts and spectres of superstition wrapped their sheets around their attenuated bodies and vanished into thin air. Other inventions rapidly followed. The wonderful power of steam was made known to the world by Watt and by Fulton. Neptune was frightened from the sea. The locomotive was given to mankind by Stephenson; the telegraph by Franklin and Morse. The rush of the ship, the scream of the locomotive, and the electric flash have frightened the monsters of ignorance from the world, and have left nothing above us but the heaven's eternal blue, filled with glittering planets wheeling through immensity in accordance with *Law*. True religion is a subordination of the passions and interests to the perceptions of the intellect. But when religion was considered the end of life, instead of a means of happiness, it overshadowed all other interests, and became the destroyer of mankind. It became a hydra-headed monster—a serpent reaching in terrible coils from the heavens, and thrusting its thousand fangs into the bleeding, quivering hearts of men.

#### SLAVERY.

I have endeavoured thus far to show you some of the results produced by enslaving the human mind. I now call your attention to another terrible phase

of this subject—the enslavement of the body. Slavery is a very ancient institution; yes, about as ancient as robbery, theft, and murder, and is based upon them all.

Springing from the same fountain that a man is not the owner of his soul is the doctrine that he is not the owner of his body. The two are always found together, supported by precisely the same arguments, and attended by the same infamous acts of cruelty. From the earliest time slavery has existed in all countries and among all people until recently. Puffendorf said that slavery was originally established by contract. Voltaire replied, Show me the original contract, and if it is signed by the party that was to be a slave I will believe you. You will bear in mind that the slavery of which I am now speaking is white slavery.

Greeks enslaved one another, as well as those captured in war. Coriolanus scrupled not to make slaves of his own countrymen captured in civil war.

Julius Cæsar sold to the highest bidder at one time fifty-three thousand prisoners of war, all of whom were white. Hannibal exposed to sale thirty thousand captives at one time, all of whom were Roman citizens. In Rome men were sold into bondage in order to pay their debts. In Germany men often hazarded their freedom on the throwing of dice. The Barbary States held white Christians in slavery in this the nineteenth century. There were white slaves in England as late as 1574. There were white slaves in Scotland until the end of the eighteenth century.

These Scotch slaves were colliers and salters. They were treated as real estate, and passed with a deed to the mines in which they worked.

It was also the law that no collier could work in any mine except in the one to which he belonged. It was also the law that their children could follow no other occupation than that of their fathers. This slavery absolutely existed in Scotland until the beginning of the glorious nineteenth century.

Some of the Roman nobles were the owners of as many as twenty thousand slaves.

The common people of France were in slavery for fourteen hundred years. They were transferred with land, and women were often seen assisting cattle to pull the plough. And yet people have the impudence to say that black slavery is right because the blacks have always been slaves in their own country. I answer, So have the whites until very recently. In the good old days, when might was right, and when kings and popes stood by the people, and protected the people, and talked about "holy oil and divine right," the world was filled with slaves. The traveller standing amid the ruins of ancient cities and empires, seeing on every side the fallen pillar and the prostrate wall, asks, Why did these cities fall, why did these empires crumble? And the ghost of the past, the wisdom of ages, answers: These temples, these palaces, these cities, the ruins of which you stand upon, were built by tyranny and injustice. The hands that built them were unpaid. The backs that bore the burdens also bore the marks of the lash. They were built by slaves to satisfy the vanity and ambition of thieves and robbers. For these reasons they are dust.

Their civilisation was a lie. Their laws merely regulated robbery and established theft. They bought and sold the bodies and souls of men; and the mournful winds of desolation, sighing amid their crumbling ruins, is a voice of prophetic warning to those who would repeat the infamous experiment. From the ruins of Babylon, of Carthage, of Athens, of Palmyra, of Thebes, of Rome, and across the great desert, over that sad and solemn sea of sand, from the land of the pyramids, over the fallen Sphinx, and from the lips of Memnon, the same voice, the same warning, and uttering the great truth that no nation founded upon slavery, either of body or mind, can stand.

And yet to-day there are thousands

upon thousands endeavouring to build the temples and cities, and to administer our government upon the old plan. They are makers of brick without straw. They are bowing themselves beneath hods of untempered mortar. They are the babbling builders of another Babel, a Babel of mud upon a foundation of sand.

Notwithstanding the experience of antiquity as to the terrible effects of slavery, bondage was the rule, and liberty the exception, during the Middle Ages not only, but for ages afterwards.

The same causes that led to the liberation of mind also liberated the body. Free the mind, allow men to write and publish and read, and one by one the shackles will drop, broken, in the dust. The truth was always known, and for that reason slaves have never been allowed to read. It has always been a crime to teach a slave. The intelligent prefer death to slavery. Education is the most radical abolitionist in the world. To teach the alphabet is to inaugurate revolution. To build a school-house is to construct a fort. Every library is an arsenal, and every truth is a monitor, iron-clad and steel-plated.

Do not think that white slavery was abolished without a struggle. The men who opposed white slavery were ridiculed, were persecuted, driven from their homes, mobbed, hanged, tortured, and burned. They were denounced as having only one idea by men who had none. They were called fanatics by men who were so insane as to suppose that the laws of a petty prince were greater than those of the universe. Crime made faces at virtue, and honesty was an out-cast beggar. In short, I cannot better describe to you the manner in which the friends of slavery acted at that time than by saying that they acted precisely as they used to in the United States. White slavery, established by kidnapping and piracy, sustained by torture and infinite cruelty, was defended to the very last.

Let me now call your attention to one



of the most immediate causes of the abolition of white slavery in Europe. There were during the Middle Ages three great classes of people—the common people, the clergy, and the nobility. All these people could, however, be divided into two classes—namely, the robbed and the robbers. The feudal lords were jealous of the king, the king afraid of the lords, the clergy always siding with the stronger party. The common people had only to do the work, the fighting, and to pay the taxes, as by the law the property of the nobles was exempt from taxation. The consequence was, in every war between the nobles and the king, each party endeavoured by conciliation to get the peasants upon their side. When the clergy were on the side of the king, they created dissension between the people and the nobles by telling them that the nobles were tyrants. When they were on the side of the nobles, they told the people that the king was a tyrant. At last the people believed both, and the old adage was verified that when thieves fall out honest men get their dues.

By virtue of the civil and religious wars of Europe slavery was abolished, and the French Revolution, one of the grandest pages in all history, was, so to speak, the exterminator of white slavery. In that terrible period the people who had borne the yoke for fourteen hundred years, rising from the dust, casting their shackles from them, fiercely avenged their wrongs. A mob of twenty millions driven to desperation, in the sublimity of despair, in the sacred name of liberty, cried for vengeance. They reddened the earth with the blood of their masters. They trampled beneath their feet the great army of human vermin that had lived upon their labour. They filled the air with the ruins of temples and thrones, and with bloody hands tore in pieces the altar upon which their rights had been offered by an impious Church. They scorned the superstitions of the past not only, but they scorned the past. For the past to them was only wrong,

imposition, and outrage. The French Revolution was the inauguration of a new era. The lava of freedom, long buried beneath a mountain of wrong and injustice, at length burst forth, overwhelming the Pompeii and Herculaneum of priestcraft and tyranny. As soon as white slavery began to decay in Europe, and while the condition of the white slaves was improving about the middle of the sixteenth century, in 1541, Alonzo Gonzales, of Portugal, pointed out to his countrymen a new field of operations, a new market for human flesh; and in a short time the African slave trade, with all its unspeakable horrors, was inaugurated.

This trade has been the great crime of modern times. It is almost impossible to conceive that nations who professed to be Christian, or even in any degree civilised, should have engaged in this infamous traffic. Yet nearly all of the nations of Europe engaged in the slave trade legalised it, protected it, fostered the practice, and vied with each other in acts the bare recital of which is enough to make the heart stand still.

It has been calculated that for years at least 400,000 Africans were either killed or enslaved annually. They crammed their ships so full of these unfortunate wretches that, as a general thing, about ten per cent. died of suffocation on the voyage. They were treated like wild beasts. In times of danger they were thrown into the sea. Remember that this horrid traffic, commenced in the middle of the sixteenth century, was carried on by nations pretending to Christian civilisation. And when do you think it was abolished by some of the principal countries? In England, Wilberforce and Clarkson dedicated their lives to the abolition of the slave trade. They were hated and despised. They persevered for twenty years, and it was not until March 25th, 1808, that England pronounced the infamous traffic in human flesh illegal, and the rejoicing in England was redoubled on receiving the news that the United States had done the



same thing. After a time those engaged in the slave trade were declared pirates.

On August 28th, 1833, England abolished slavery throughout the British Colonies, thus giving liberty to nearly one million slaves.

The United States was then the greatest slave-holding power in the civilised world.

We are all acquainted with the history of slavery in this country. We know that it corrupted our people, that it has drenched our land in fraternal blood, that it has clad our country in mourning for the loss of 300,000 of her bravest sons, that it carried us back to the darkest ages of the world, that it led us to the very brink of destruction—forced us to the shattered gates of eternal ruin, death, and annihilation. But Liberty rising above party prejudice, Freedom, lifting itself above all other considerations,

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,—

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

And on January 1st, 1863, the grandest new year that ever dawned upon this continent, in accordance with the will of the heroic North, by the sublime act of one whose name will be sacred through all the coming years, the justice so long delayed was accomplished, and four millions of slaves became chainless.

#### LIBERTY TRIUMPHED.

Liberty, that most sacred word, without which all other words are vain, without which life is worse than death, and men are beasts. I never see the word "liberty" without seeing a halo of glory around it. It is a word worthy of the lips of a god. Can you realise the fact that only a few years ago the most shocking system of slavery—the most barbarous—existed in our country, and that you and I were bound by the laws of the United States to stand between a human being and his liberty? That we were absolutely compelled by law to

hand back that human being to the lash and chain? That by our laws children were sold from the arms of mothers, wives sold from their husbands? That we executed our laws with the assistance of bloodhounds, owned and trained by human bloodhounds fiercer still, and that all this was not only upheld by politicians, but by the pretended ministers of Christ? That the pulpit was in partnership with the auction block, that the bloodhound's bark was only an echo from many of the Churches?

And that this was all done under the sacred name of liberty by a republican government that was founded upon the sublime declaration that all men are equal? This all seems to me like a horrid dream, a nightmare of terror, a hellish impossibility. And yet, with cheeks glowing and burning with shame, before the bar of history, we are forced to plead guilty to this terrible charge. We made a whipping-post of the cross of Christ. It is true that in a great degree we have atoned for this national crime. Our bravest and our best have been sacrificed. We have borne the bloody burden of war. The good and the true have been with us, and the women of the North have won glory imperishable. They robbed war of half its terrors. Not content with binding the wreath of victory upon the leader's brow, they bandaged the soldiers' wounds, they nerved the living, comforted the dying, and smiled upon the great victory through their tears.

They have consoled the hero's widow, and are educating his orphans. They have erected a monument to enlightened charity to which time can add only grandeur. There is much, however, to be accomplished yet. Slavery has been abolished, but progress requires more. We are called upon to make this a free government in the broadest sense, to give liberty to all. Standing in the presence of all history, knowing the experience of mankind, knowing that the earth is covered with countless wrecks of cruel failures, appealed to by the great

army of martyrs and heroes who have gone before, by the sacred dust filling innumerable graves, by the memory of our own noble dead, by all the suffering of the past, by all the hopes for the future, by all the glorious dead and the countless millions yet to be, I pray, I beseech, I implore the American people to lay the foundation of the government upon the principles of eternal justice. I pray, I beseech, I implore them to take for the corner-stone universal human liberty—the stone which has been heretofore rejected by all the builders of nations. The government will then stand, and the swelling dome of the temple will touch the stars.

### CONCLUSION.

I have thus endeavoured to show you some of the effects of slavery, and to prove to you that a step, in order to be in the direction of progress, must be in the direction of freedom; that slavery, either of body or mind, is barbarism, and is practised and defended only by infamous tyrants or their dupes. I have endeavoured to point out some of the causes of the abolition of slavery, both of body and mind. There is one truth, however, that you must not forget, and that is that every evil tends to correct and abolish itself. I believe, however, that the diffusion of knowledge, more than everything else combined, has ameliorated the condition of mankind. When there was no freedom of speech and no press, then every idea perished in the brain that gave it birth. One man could not profit by the thought of another. The experience of the past was in a great degree unknown. And this state of things produced the same effect in the mental world that confining all the water to the springs would in the physical. Confine the water to the springs, the rivulets would cease to murmur, the rivers to flow, and the ocean itself would become a desert of

sand. But with the invention of printing ideas began to circulate, born of the busy brain of the million; little rivulets of facts running into rivers of information, and they all flowing into the great ocean of human knowledge.

This exchange of ideas, this comparison of thought, has given to each generation the advantage of all the past. This more than all else has enabled man to improve his condition. It is by this that from the log or piece of bark on which a naked savage floated we have, by successive improvements, created a man-of-war carrying a hundred guns and miles of canvas. By these means we have changed a handful of sand into a telescope. In the hands of science a drop of water has become a giant, turning with swift and tireless arm the countless wheels. The sun has become an artist, painting with shining beams the very thoughts within our eyes. The elements have been taught to do our bidding; and the electric spark, freighted with human thought and love, defies distance and devours time as it sweeps under all the waves of the sea.

These are some of the results of free-thought and free labour. I have barely alluded to a few—where is improvement to stop? Science is only in its infancy. It has accomplished all this, and is in its cradle still.

We are standing on the shore of an infinite ocean whose countless waves, freighted with blessings, are welcoming our adventurous feet. Progress has been written on every soul. The human race is advancing.

Forward, oh sublime army of progress, forward until law is justice, forward until ignorance is unknown, forward while there is a spiritual or temporal throne, forward until superstition is a forgotten dream, forward until the world is free, forward until the human reason, clothed in the purple of authority, is king of kings.

## WHAT IS RELIGION?\*

It is asserted that an infinite God created all things, governs all things, and that the creature should be obedient and thankful to the creator; that the creator demands certain things, and that the person who complies with these demands is religious. This kind of religion has been substantially universal.

For many centuries and by many peoples it was believed that this God demanded sacrifices; that he was pleased when parents shed the blood of their babes. Afterwards it was supposed that he was satisfied with the blood of oxen, lambs, and doves, and that in exchange for or on account of these sacrifices this God gave rain, sunshine, and harvest. It was also believed that if the sacrifices were not made this God sent pestilence, famine, flood, and earthquake.

The last phase of this belief in sacrifice was, according to the Christian doctrine, that God accepted the blood of his son, and that, after his son had been murdered, he, God, was satisfied, and wanted no more blood.

During all these years and by all these peoples it was believed that this God heard and answered prayer; that he forgave sins, and saved the souls of true believers. This, in a general way, is the definition of religion.

Now, the questions are: Whether religion was founded on any known fact? Whether such a being as God exists? Whether he was the creator of yourself and myself? Whether any prayer was ever answered? Whether any sacrifice of babe or ox secured the favour of this unseen God?

*First.*—Did an infinite God create the children of men?

Why did he create the intellectually inferior?

Why did he create the deformed and helpless?

Why did he create the criminal, the idiotic, the insane?

Can infinite wisdom and power make any excuse for the creation of failures?

Are the failures under obligation to their creator?

*Second.*—Is an infinite God the governor of this world?

Is he responsible for all the chiefs, kings, emperors, and queens?

Is he responsible for all the wars that have been waged, for all the innocent blood that has been shed?

Is he responsible for the centuries of slavery, for the backs that have been scarred with the lash, for the babes that have been sold from the breasts of mothers, for the families that have been separated and destroyed?

Is this God responsible for religious persecution, for the Inquisition, for the thumbscrew and rack, and for all the instruments of torture?

Did this God allow the cruel and vile to destroy the brave and virtuous? Did he allow tyrants to shed the blood of patriots?

Did he allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

What is such a God worth?

Would a decent man, having the power to prevent it, allow his enemies to torture and burn his friends?

Can we conceive of a devil base enough to prefer his enemies to his friends?

If a good and infinitely powerful God governs this world, how can we account for cyclones, earthquakes, pestilence, and famine?

How can we account for cancers, for microbes, for diphtheria, and the

\* This was Colonel Ingersoll's last public address, delivered before the American Free Religious Association, in the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, June 2nd, 1899.



thousand diseases that prey on infancy?

How can we account for the wild beasts that devour human beings, for the fanged serpents whose bite is death?

How can we account for a world where life feeds on life?

Were beak and claw, tooth and fang, invented and produced by infinite mercy?

Did infinite goodness fashion the wings of the eagles so that their fleeing prey could be overtaken?

Did infinite goodness create the beasts of prey with the intention that they should devour the weak and helpless?

Did infinite goodness create the countless worthless living things that breed within and feed upon the flesh of higher forms?

Did infinite wisdom intentionally produce the microscopic beasts that feed upon the optic nerve?

Think of blinding a man to satisfy the appetite of a microbe!

Think of life feeding on life! Think of the victims! Think of the Niagara of blood pouring over the precipice of cruelty!

In view of these facts, what, after all, is religion?

It is fear.

Fear builds the altar and offers the sacrifice.

Fear erects the cathedral and bows the head of men in worship.

Fear bends the knees and utters the prayer.

Fear pretends to love.

Religion teaches the slave-virtues—obedience, humility, self-denial, forgiveness, non-resistance.

Lips, religious and fearful, tremblingly repeat this passage: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is the abyss of degradation.

Religion does not teach self-reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defence.

Religion makes God a master and man his serf. The master cannot be great enough to make slavery sweet.

## II.

If this God exists, how do we know that he is good? How can we prove that he is merciful, that he cares for the children of men? If this God exists, he has on many occasions seen millions of his poor children ploughing the fields, sowing and planting the grain; and when he saw them he knew that they depended on the expected crop for life; and yet this good God, this merciful being, withheld the rain. He caused the sun to rise, to steal all moisture from the land, but gave no rain. He saw the seeds that man had planted wither and perish, but he sent no rain. He saw the people look with sad eyes upon the barren earth, and he sent no rain. He saw them slowly devour the little that they had, and saw them when the days of hunger came—saw them slowly waste away, saw their hungry, sunken eyes, heard their prayers, saw them devour the miserable animals that they had, saw fathers and mothers, insane with hunger, kill and eat their shrivelled babes; and yet the heaven above them was as brass and the earth beneath as iron, and he sent no rain. Can we say that in the heart of this God there blossomed the flower of pity? Can we say that he cared for the children of men? Can we say that his mercy endureth for ever?

Do we prove that this God is good because he sends the cyclone that wrecks villages and covers the fields with the mangled bodies of fathers, mothers, and babes? Do we prove his goodness by showing that he has opened the earth and swallowed thousands of his helpless children, or that with the volcanoes he has overwhelmed them with rivers of fire? Can we infer the goodness of God from the facts we know?

If these calamities did not happen, would we suspect that God cared nothing for human beings? If there were no famine, no pestilence, no cyclone, no earthquake, would we think that God is not good?

According to the theologians, God did not make all men alike. He made races differing in intelligence, stature, and colour. Was there goodness, was there wisdom, in this?

Ought the superior races to thank God that they are not the inferior? If we say yes, then I ask another question: Should the inferior races thank God that they are not superior, or should they thank God that they are not beasts?

When God made these different races he knew that the superior would enslave the inferior; knew that the inferior would be conquered, and finally destroyed.

If God did this, and knew the blood that would be shed, the agonies that would be endured, saw the countless fields covered with the corpses of the slain, saw all the bleeding backs of slaves, all the broken hearts of mothers bereft of babes—if he saw and knew all this, can we conceive of a more malicious fiend?

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away, the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood, the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shrivelled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning's stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague, and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn, and the robed hypocrites, with clasped and bloody hands, who thanked their God—

a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world: these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

### III.—THE POWER THAT WORKS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Most people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one god, they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances, through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds that it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right-hand road, and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place he does not take the left-hand road. He has tried that road, and knows that it is the wrong road. He takes the right road, and thereupon these theologians say: "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame, grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is burned, and after that the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavoured to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense; that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported, and that conscience is an exotic. Taking



the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagine a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being. We live together in families, tribes, and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe, or of the nation, are considered good members. They are praised, admired, and respected. They are regarded as good; that is to say, as moral.

The members who add to the misery of the family, the tribe, or the nation, are considered bad members. They are blamed, despised, punished. They are regarded as immoral.

The family, the tribe, the nation, creates a standard of conduct, of morality. There is nothing supernatural in this.

The greatest of human beings has said: "Conscience is born of love."

The sense of obligation, of duty, was naturally produced.

Among savages the immediate consequences of actions are taken into consideration. As people advance, the remote consequences are perceived. The standard of conduct becomes higher. The imagination is cultivated. A man puts himself in the place of another. The sense of duty becomes stronger, more imperative. Man judges himself.

He loves, and love is the commencement, the foundation, of the highest virtues. He injures one that he loves. Then come regret, repentance, sorrow, conscience. In all this there is nothing supernatural.

Man has deceived himself. Nature is a mirror in which man sees his own image, and all supernatural religions rest on the pretence that the image which appears to be behind this mirror has been caught.

All the metaphysicians of the spiritual type, from Plato to Swedenborg, have manufactured their facts, and all founders of religion have done the same.

Suppose that an infinite God exists, what can we do for him? Being infinite,

he is conditionless; being conditionless, he cannot be benefited or injured. He cannot want. He has.

Think of the egotism of a man who believes that an infinite being wants his praise!

#### IV.

What has our religion done? Of course, it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are false, and consequently we need examine only our own.

Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the Church had control were men made better and happier?

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland?

What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could these countries have been worse without religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and worshipped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer, and cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers. What did Christianity do for them? They hated pleasure. On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They muffled all the bells of gladness. They made cradles by putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with infancy and youth, with prattle of babes, and the song of the morning.

The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated curse. The Puritan believed the Bible to be the word of



God, and this belief has always made those who held it cruel and wretched. Would the Puritan have been worse if he had adopted the religion of the North American Indians?

Let me refer to just one fact showing the influence of a belief in the Bible on human beings.

"On the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth she was presented with a Geneva Bible by an old man representing Time, with Truth standing by his side as a child. The Queen received the Bible, kissed it, and pledged herself to diligently read therein. In the dedication of this blessed Bible the Queen was piously exhorted to put all Papists to the sword."

In this incident we see the real spirit of Protestant lovers of the Bible. In other words, it was just as fiendish, just as infamous, as the Catholic spirit.

Has the Bible made the people of Georgia kind and merciful? Would the lynchers be more ferocious if they worshipped gods of wood and stone?

#### V.—HOW CAN MANKIND BE REFORMED WITHOUT RELIGION?

Religion has been tried, and in all countries, in all times, has failed.

Religion has never made man merciful. Remember the Inquisition.

What effect did religion have on slavery?

What effect upon Libby, Saulsbury, and Andersonville?

Religion has always been the enemy of science, of investigation and thought. Religion has never made man free.

It has never made man moral, temperate, industrious, and honest.

Are Christians more temperate, nearer virtuous, nearer honest, than savages?

Among savages do we not find that their vices and cruelties are the fruits of their superstitions?

To those who believe in the uniformity of nature religion is impossible.

Can we affect the nature and qualities of substance by prayer? Can we hasten or delay the tides by worship? Can we

change winds by sacrifice? Will kneeling give us wealth? Can we cure disease by supplication? Can we add to our knowledge by ceremony? Can we receive virtue or honour as alms?

Are not the facts in the mental world just as stubborn, just as necessarily produced, as the facts in the material world? Is not what we call mind just as natural as what we call body?

Religion rests on the idea that nature has a master, and that this master will listen to prayer; that this master punishes and rewards; that he loves praise and flattery, and hates the brave and free.

Has man obtained any help from heaven?

#### VI.

If we have a theory, we must have facts for the foundation. We must have corner-stones. We must not build on guesses, fancies, analogies, or inferences. The structure must have a basement. If we build, we must begin at the bottom.

I have a theory, and I have four corner-stones.

The first stone is that matter—substance—cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated.

The second stone is that force cannot be destroyed, cannot be annihilated.

The third stone is that matter and force cannot exist apart—no matter without force, no force without matter.

The fourth stone is that that which cannot be destroyed could not have been created; that the indestructible is the uncreatable.

If these corner-stones are facts, it follows as a necessity that matter and force are from and to eternity; that they can neither be increased nor diminished.

It follows that nothing has been or can be created; that there never has been or can be a creator.

It follows that there could not have been any intelligence, any design, back of matter and force.

There is no intelligence without force. There is no force without matter. Consequently there could not by any

possibility have been any intelligence, any force, back of matter.

It therefore follows that the supernatural does not and cannot exist. If these four corner-stones are facts, nature has no master. If matter and force are from and to eternity, it follows as a necessity that no God exists; that no God created or governs the universe; that no God exists who answers prayer; no God who succours the oppressed; no God who pities the sufferings of innocence; no God who cares for the slaves with scarred flesh, the mothers robbed of their babes; no God who rescues the tortured, and no God that saves a martyr from the flames. In other words, it proves that man has never received any help from heaven; that all sacrifices have been in vain, and that all prayers have died unanswered in the heedless air. I do not pretend to know. I say what I think.

If matter and force have existed from eternity, it then follows that all that has been possible has happened, all that is possible is happening, and all that will be possible will happen.

In the universe there is no chance, no caprice. Every event has parents.

That which has not happened could not. The present is the necessary product of all the past, the necessary cause of all the future.

In the infinite chain there is, and there can be, no broken, no missing link. The form and motion of every star, the climate of every world, all forms of vegetable and animal life, all instinct, intelligence, and conscience, all assertions and denials, all vices and virtues, all thoughts and dreams, all hopes and fears, are necessities. Not one of the countless things and relations in the universe could have been different.

## VII.

If matter and force are from eternity, then we can say that man had no intelligent creator, that man was not a special creation.

We now know, if we know anything,

that Jehovah, the divine potter, did not mix and mould clay into the forms of men and women, and then breathe the breath of life into these forms.

We now know that our first parents were not foreigners. We know that they were natives of this world, produced here, and that their life did not come from the breath of any god. We now know, if we know anything, that the universe is natural, and that men and women have been naturally produced. We now know our ancestors, our pedigree. We have the family tree.

We have all the links of the chain, twenty-six links inclusive from moneron to man.

We did not get our information from inspired books. We have fossil facts and living forms.

From the simplest creatures, from blind sensation, from organism, from one vague want, to a single cell with a nucleus, to a hollow ball filled with fluid, to a cup with double walls, to a flat worm, to a something that begins to breathe, to an organism that has a spinal cord, to a link between the invertebrate and the vertebrate, to one that has a cranium—a house for a brain—to one with fins, still onward to one with fore and hinder fins, to the reptile mammalia, to the marsupials, to the lemures, dwellers in trees, to the simiæ, to the pithecanthropi, and, lastly, to man.

We know the paths that life has travelled. We know the footsteps of advance. They have been traced. The last link has been found. For this we are indebted, more than to all others, to the greatest of biologists, Ernst Haeckel.

We now believe that the universe is natural, and we deny the existence of the supernatural.

## VIII.—REFORM.

For thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. They have created gods and devils, heavens and hells; they have written sacred books, performed miracles, built cathedrals and dungeons; they have

crowned and uncrowned kings and queens; they have tortured and imprisoned, flayed alive and burned; they have preached and prayed; they have tried promises and threats; they have coaxed and persuaded; they have preached and taught, and in countless ways have endeavoured to make people honest, temperate, industrious, and virtuous; they have built hospitals and asylums, universities and schools, and seem to have done their very best to make mankind better and happier, and yet they have not succeeded.

Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why.

Ignorance, poverty, and vice are populating the world. The gutter is a nursery. People unable even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts, and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck, and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences, or to feel responsibility. At the same time, they do not want children, because a child is a curse—a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden. These unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime.

Failure seems to be the trade-mark of nature. Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention, and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.

The real question is, Can we prevent the ignorant, the poor; the vicious, from filling the world with their children?

Can we prevent this Missouri of

ignorance and vice from emptying into the Mississippi of civilisation?

Must the world for ever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilised to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all?

Why should men and women have children that they cannot take care of—children that are burdens and curses? Why? Because they have more passion than intelligence, more passion than conscience, more passion than reason.

You cannot reform these people with tracts and talk. You cannot reform these people with preaching and creed. Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, beggars, and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poor-houses, and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminals nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fire-flies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty, and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible saviour of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped with glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy.

Men and women who believe that slaves are purer, truer, than the free, who believe that fear is a safer guide



than knowledge, that only those are really good who obey the commands of others, and that ignorance is the soil in which the perfect, perfumed flower of virtue grows, will with protesting hands hide their shocked faces.

Men and women who think that light is the enemy of virtue, that purity dwells in darkness, that it is dangerous for human beings to know themselves and the facts in nature that affect their well-being, will be horrified at the thought of making intelligence the master of passion.

But I look forward to the time when men and women, by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetuate disease and pain, will refuse to fill the world with failures.

When that time comes the prison walls will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light, and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth. Poverty and crime will be childless. The withered hands of want will not be stretched for alms. They will be dust. The whole world will be intelligent, virtuous, and free.

#### IX.

Religion can never reform mankind, because religion is slavery.

It is far better to be free, to leave the forts and barricades of fear, to stand erect and face the future with a smile.

It is far better to give yourself sometimes to negligence, to drift with wave and tide, with the blind force of the world, to think and dream, to forget the chains and limitations of the breathing life, to forget purpose and object, to lounge in the picture gallery of the brain, to feel once more the clasps and kisses of the past, to bring life's morning back, to see again the forms and faces of the dead, to paint fair pictures for the coming years, to forget all Gods, their promises and threats, to feel within your veins life's joyous stream, and hear the martial music, the rhythmic beating of your fearless heart.

And then to rouse yourself to do all useful things, to reach with thought and deed the ideal in your brain, to give your fancies wing, that they, like chemist bees, may find art's nectar in the weeds of common things, to look with trained and steady eyes for facts, to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now, to increase knowledge, to take burdens from the weak, to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make a palace for the soul.

This is real religion. This is real worship.

## MYTH AND MIRACLE

## I.

HAPPINESS is the true end and aim of life. It is the task of intelligence to ascertain the conditions of happiness, and when found the truly wise will live in accordance with them. By happiness is meant not simply the joy of eating and drinking—the gratification of the appetite—but good, well being, in the highest and noblest forms. The joy that springs from obligation discharged, from duty done, from generous acts, from being true to the ideal, from a perception of the beautiful in nature, art, and conduct. The happiness that is born of and gives birth to poetry and music, that follows the gratification of the highest wants.

Happiness is the result of all that is really right and sane.

But there are many people who regard the desire to be happy as a very low and degrading ambition. These people call themselves spiritual. They pretend to care nothing for the pleasures of "sense." They hold this world, this life, in contempt. They do not want happiness in this world, but in another. Here happiness degrades—there it purifies and ennobles.

These spiritual people have been known as prophets, apostles, augurs, hermits, monks, priests, popes, bishops, and parsons. They are devout and useless. They do not cultivate the soil. They produce nothing. They live on the labour of others. They are pious and parasitic. They pray for others, if the others will work for them. They claim to have been selected by the Infinite to instruct and govern mankind. They are "meek" and arrogant, "long-suffering" and revengeful.

They ever have been, now are, and always will be, the enemies of liberty, of

investigation and science. They are believers in the supernatural, the miraculous, and the absurd. They have filled the world with hatred, bigotry, and fear. In defence of their creeds they have committed every crime and practised every cruelty.

They denounce as worldly and sensual those who are gross enough to love wives and children, to build homes, to fell the forests, to navigate the seas, to cultivate the earth, to chisel statues, to paint pictures and fill the world with love and art.

They have denounced and maligned the thinkers, the poets, the dramatists, the composers, the actors, the orators, the workers—those who have conquered the world for man.

According to them, this world is only the vestibule of the next, a kind of school, an ordeal, a place of probation. They have always insisted that this life should be spent in preparing for the next; that those who supported and obeyed the "spiritual guides"—the shepherds—would be rewarded with an eternity of joy, and that all others would suffer eternal pain.

These spiritual people have always hated labour. They have added nothing to the wealth of the world. They have always lived on alms—on the labour of others. They have always been the enemies of innocent pleasure and of human love.

These spiritual people have produced a literature. The books they have written are called sacred. Our sacred books are called the Bible. The Hindoos have the Vedas and many others; the Persians, the Zend Avesta; the Egyptians had the Book of the Dead; the Aztecs, the Popol Vuh; and the Mohammedans have the Koran.

These books, for the most part, treat of the unknowable. They describe

gods and winged phantoms of the air. They give accounts of the origin of the universe, the creation of man, and the worlds beyond this. They contain nothing of value. Millions and millions of people have wasted their lives studying these absurd and ignorant books.

The "spiritual people" in each country claimed that their books had been written by inspired men, that God was the real author, and that all men and women who denied this would be, after death, tormented for ever.

And yet the worldly people, the uninspired, the wicked, have produced a far greater literature than the spiritual and the inspired.

Not all the sacred books of the world equal Shakespeare's "volume of the brain." A purer philosophy, grander, nobler, fell from the lips of Shakespeare's clowns than the Old Testament, or the New, contains.

The Declaration of Independence is nobler far than all the utterances from Sinai's cloud and flame. "A man's a man for a' that," by Robert Burns, is better than anything the sacred books contain. For my part, I would rather hear Beethoven's Sixth Symphony than to read the five books of Moses. Give me the Sixth Symphony—a sound-wrought picture of the fields and woods, of flowering hedge, and happy homes, where thrushes build and swallows fly, and mothers sing to babes, an echo of the babbling lullaby of brooks that dallying wind and flow where meadows bare their daisied bosoms to the sun, the joyous mimicry of summer rain—the laugh of children and the rhythmic rustle of the whispering leaves, the strophe of peasant life—a perfect poem of content and love.

I would rather listen to Tristan and Isolde—that Mississippi of melody, where the great notes, winged like eagles, lift the soul above the cares and griefs of this weary world—than to all the orthodox sermons ever preached. I would rather look at the Venus de Milo than read the Presbyterian creed.

The spiritual have endeavoured to civilise the world through fear and faith—by the promise of reward and the threat of pain in other worlds. They taught men to hate and persecute their fellow-men. In all ages they have appealed to force. During all the years they have practised fraud. They have pretended to have influence with the gods; that their prayers gave rain, sunshine, and harvest; that their curses brought pestilence and famine; and that their blessings filled the world with plenty. They have subsisted on the fears their falsehoods created. Like poisonous vines, they have lived on the oak of labour. They have praised charity, but they never gave. They have denounced revenge, but they never forgave.

Whenever the spiritual have had power, art has died, learning has languished, science has been despised, liberty destroyed, the thinkers have been imprisoned, the intelligent and honest have been outcasts, and the brave have been murdered.

The "spiritual" have been, are, and always will be, the enemies of the human race.

For all the blessings that we now enjoy; for progress in every form; for science and art; for all that has lengthened life, that has conquered disease, that has lessened pain; for raiment, roof, and food; for music in its highest forms; for the poetry that has ennobled and enriched our lives; for the marvellous machines now working for the world—for all this we are indebted to the worldly, to those who turned their attention to the affairs of this life. They have been the only benefactors of our race.

## II.

And yet all of these religions, these "sacred books," these priests, have been naturally produced. From the dens and caves of savagery to the palaces of civilisation men have travelled by the necessary paths and roads. Back of



every step has been the efficient cause. In the history of the world there has been no chance, no interference from without, nothing miraculous. Everything in accordance with and produced by the facts in nature.

We need not blame the hypocritical and cruel. They thought and acted as they were compelled to think and act.

In all ages man has tried to account for himself and his surroundings. He did the best he could. He wondered why the water ran, why the trees grew, why the clouds floated, why the stars shone, why the sun and moon journeyed through the heavens. He was troubled about life and death, about darkness and dreams. The seas, the volcanoes, the lightning and thunder, the earthquake and cyclone, filled him with fear. Behind all life and growth and motion, and even inanimate things, he placed a spirit—an intelligent being; a fetish, a person, something like himself; a god, controlled by love and hate. To him causes and effects became gods—supernatural beings. The Dawn was a maiden, wondrously fair; the Sun, a warrior and lover; the Night, a serpent, a wolf; the Wind, a musician; Winter, a wild beast; Autumn, Proserpine gathering flowers.

Poets were the makers of these myths. They were the first to account for what they saw and felt. The great multitude mistook these fancies for facts. Myths strangely alike were produced by most nations, and gradually took possession of the world.

The Sleeping Beauty, a myth of the year, has been found among most peoples. In this myth the Earth was a maiden—the Sun was her lover. She had fallen asleep in winter. Her blood was still, and her breath had gone. In the Spring the lover came, clasped her in his arms, covered her lips and cheeks with kisses. She was thrilled, her heart began to beat, she breathed, her blood flowed, and she awoke to love and joy. This myth has made the circuit of the globe.

So, Red Riding-Hood is the history

of a day. Little Red Riding-Hood—the morning, touched with red—goes to visit her kindred, a day that is past. She is attacked by the wolf of night, and is rescued by the hunter, Apollo, who pierces the heart of the beast with an arrow of light.

The beautiful myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is the story of the year. Eurydice has been captured and carried to the infernal world. Orpheus, playing upon his harp, goes after her. Such is the effect of his music when he reaches the realm of Pluto, the laughterless, that Tantalus ceases his efforts to slake his thirst. He listens and forgets his withered lips; the daughters of the Danaides cease their vain efforts to fill the sieve with water; Sisyphus sits down on the stone that he so often had heaved against the mountain's misty side; Ixion pauses upon his wheel of fire; even Pluto smiles; and, for the first time in the history of hell, the cheeks of the Furies are wet with tears.

"Give me back Eurydice," cried Orpheus, and Pluto said: "Take her, but look not back." Orpheus led the way, and Eurydice followed. Just as he reached the upper world he missed her footsteps, turned, looked, and she vanished.

And thus the summer comes, is lost, and comes again through all the years.

So, our ancestors believed in the Garden of Eden, in the Golden Age, in the blessed time when all were good and pure—when nature satisfied the wants of all. The race, like the old man, has golden dreams of youth. The morning was filled with light and life and joy, and the evening is always sad. When the old man was young, girls were beautiful, and men were honest. He remembers his Eden. And so the whole world has had its age of gold.

Our fathers were believers in the Elysian Fields. They were in the far, far West. They saw them at the setting of the sun. They saw the floating isles of gold in sapphire seas; the templed mist with spires and domes of emerald and

amethyst; the magic caverns of the clouds, resplendent with the rays of every gem. And as they looked they thought the curtain had been drawn aside, and that their eyes had for a moment feasted on the glories of another world.

The myth of the Flood has also been universal. Finding shells of the seas on plain and mountain, and everywhere some traces of the waves, they thought the world had been submerged—that God in wrath had drowned the race, except a few his mercy saved.

The Hindoos say that Menu, a holy man, dipped from the Ganges some water, and in the basin saw a little fish. The fish begged him to throw him back into the river, and Menu, having pity, cast him back. The fish then told Menu that there was to be a flood—told him to build an ark, to take on board people, animals, and food, and that when the flood came he, the fish, would save him. The saint did as he was told; the flood came, the fish returned. By that time he had grown to be a whale with a horn in his head. About this horn Menu fastened a rope, attached the other end to the ark, and the fish towed the boat across the raging waves to a mountain's top, where it rested until the waters subsided. The name of this wonderful fish was Matsaya.

Many other nations told similar stories of floods and arks and the sending forth of doves.

In all these myths and legends of the past we find philosophies and dreams and efforts, stained with tears, of great and tender souls who tried to pierce the mysteries of life and death, to answer the questions of the whence and whither, and who vainly sought with bits of shattered glass to make a mirror that would in very truth reflect the face and form of Nature's perfect self. These myths were born of hopes and fears, of tears and smiles, and they were touched and coloured by all there is of joy and grief between the rosy dawn of birth and death's sad night. They clothed

even the stars with passion, and gave to gods the faults and frailties of the sons of men. In them the winds and waves were music, and all the springs, the mountains, woods, and perfumed dells were haunted by a thousand fairy forms. They thrilled the veins of Spring with tremulous desire, made tawny Summer's billowy breast the throne and home of love, filled Autumn's arms with sun-kissed grapes and gathered sheaves, and pictured Winter as a weak old king, who felt, like Lear, upon his withered face, Cordelia's tears.

These myths, though false in fact, are beautiful and true in thought, and have for many ages and in countless ways enriched the heart and kindled thought.

### III.

In all probability the first religion was Sun-worship. Nothing could have been more natural. Light was life and warmth and love. The sun was the fireside of the world. The sun was the "all-seeing"—the "Sky Father." Darkness was grief and death, and in the shadows crawled the serpents of despair and fear.

The sun was a great warrior, fighting the hosts of Night. Apollo was the sun, and he fought and conquered the serpent of Night. Agni, the generous, who loved the lowliest and visited the humblest, was the sun. He was the god of fire, and the crossed sticks that by friction leaped into flame were his emblem. It was said that, in spite of his goodness, he devoured his father and mother, the two pieces of wood being his parents. Baldur was the sun. He was in love with the Dawn—a maiden; he deserted her, and travelled through the heavens alone. At the twilight they met, were reconciled, and the drops of dew were the tears of joy they shed.

Christna was the sun. At his birth the Ganges thrilled from its source to the sea. All the trees, the dead as well as the living, burst into leaf and bud and flower.

Hercules was a sun-god.

Jonah the same, rescued from the



fiends of Night and carried by the fish through the under world. Samson was a sun-god. His strength was in his hair—in his beams. He was shorn of his strength by Delilah, the shadow—the darkness. So, Osiris, Bacchus, Mithra, Hermes, Buddha, Quetzalcoatl, Prometheus, Zoroaster, Perseus, Cadom, Lao-tse, Fo-hi, Horus, and Rameses were all sun-gods.

All these gods had gods for fathers, and all their mothers were virgins.

The births of nearly all were announced by stars.

When they were born there was celestial music—voices declared that a blessing had come upon the earth.

When Buddha was born the celestial choir sang: "This day is born, for the good of men, Buddha, and to dispel the darkness of their ignorance—to give joy and peace to the world."

Chrishna was born in a cave, and protected by shepherds. Bacchus, Apollo, Mithra, and Hermes were all born in caves. Buddha was born in an inn—according to some, under a tree.

Tyrants sought to kill all these gods when they were babes.

When Chrishna was born a tyrant killed the babes of the neighbourhood.

Buddha was the child of Maya, a virgin, in the kingdom of Madura. The king arrested Maya before the child was born, and imprisoned her in a tower. During the night when a child was born a great wind wrecked the tower, and carried mother and child to a place of safety. The next morning the king sent his soldiers to kill the babes, and when they came to Buddha and his mother the babe appeared to be about twelve years of age, and the soldiers passed on.

So Typhon sought in many ways to destroy the babe Horus. The king pursued the infant Zoroaster. Cadmus tried to kill the infant Bacchus.

All of these gods were born on December 25th.

Nearly all were worshipped by "wise men."

All of them fasted for forty days.

All met with violent death.

All rose from the dead.

The history of these gods is the history of our Christ. He had a god for a father, a virgin for a mother. He was born in a manger, or a cave, on December 25th. His birth was announced by angels. He was worshipped by wise men, guided by a star. Herod, seeking his life, caused the death of many babes. Christ fasted for forty days. So, it rained for forty days before the flood. Moses was on Mount Sinai for forty days. The temple had forty pillars, and the Jews wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Christ met with a violent death, and rose from the dead.

These things are not accidents—not coincidences. Christ was a sun-god. All religions have been born of sun-worship. To-day, when priests pray, they shut their eyes. This is a survival of sun-worship. When men worshipped the sun they had to shut their eyes. Afterwards, to flatter idols, they pretended that the glory of their faces was more than the eyes could bear.

In the religion of our day there is nothing original. All of its doctrines, its symbols, and ceremonies are but the survivals of creeds that perished long ago. Baptism is far older than Christianity—than Judaism. The Hindoos, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and Romans had holy water. The eucharist was borrowed from the Pagans. Ceres was the goddess of the fields, Bacchus the god of the vine. At the harvest festival they made cakes of wheat, and said: "These are the flesh of the goddess." They drank wine, and cried: "This is the blood of our god."

The cross has been a symbol for many thousands of years. It was a symbol of immortality—of life, of the god Agni, the form of the grave of a man. An ancient people of Italy, who lived long before the Romans, long before the Etruscans, so long that not one word of their language is known, used the cross, and beneath that emblem, carved on stone, their dead still rest. In the forests of



Central America ruined temples have been found, and on the walls the cross with the bleeding victim. On Babylonian cylinders is the impression of the cross. The Trinity came from Egypt. Osiris, Isis, and Horus were worshipped thousands of years before our Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were thought of. So the Tree of Life grew in India, China, and among the Aztecs long before the Garden of Eden was planted. Long before our Bible was known other nations had their sacred books, temples and altars, sacrifices, ceremonies and priests. The "Fall of Man" is far older than our religion, and so are the "Atonement" and the Scheme of Redemption.

In our blessed religion there is nothing new, nothing original.

Among the Egyptians the cross was a symbol of the life to come. And yet the first religion was, and all religions growing out of that were, naturally produced. Every brain was a field in which Nature sowed the seeds of thought. The rise and set of sun; the birth and death of day; the dawns of silver and the dusks of gold; the wonders of the rain and snow; the shroud of Winter and the many-coloured robe of Spring; the lonely moon with nightly loss or gain; the serpent lightning and the thunder's voice; the tempest's fury and the zephyr's sigh; the threat of storm and promise of the bow; cathedral clouds with dome and spire; earthquake and strange eclipse; frost and fire; the snow-crowned mountains with their tongues of flame; the fields of space sown thick with stars; the wandering comets hurrying past the fixed and sleepless sentinels of night; the marvels of the earth and air; the perfumed flower; the painted wing; the waveless pool that held within its magic breast the image of the startled face; the mimic echo that made a record in the viewless air; the pathless forests and the boundless seas; the ebb and flow of tides; the slow, deep breathing of some vague and monstrous life; the miracle

of birth; the mystery of dream and death—and over all the silent and immeasurable dome. These were the warp and woof, and at the loom sat Love and Fancy, Hope and Fear, and wove the wondrous tapestries whereon we find pictures of gods and fairy lands and all the legends that were told when Nature rocked the cradle of the infant world.

#### IV.

We must remember that there is a great difference between a myth and a miracle. A myth is the idealisation of a fact. A miracle is the counterfeit of a fact. There is the same difference between a myth and a miracle that there is between fiction and falsehood—between poetry and perjury. Miracles belong to the far past and the far future. The little line of sand, called the present, between the seas, belongs to common sense, to the natural.

If you should tell a man that the dead were raised two thousand years ago, he would probably say: "Yes, I know that." If you should say that a hundred thousand years from now all the dead will be raised, he might say: "Probably they will." But if you should tell him that you saw a dead man raised and given life that day, he would likely ask the name of the insane asylum from which you had escaped.

Our Bible is filled with accounts of miracles, and yet they always failed to convince.

Jehovah, according to the Scriptures, wrought hundreds of miracles for the benefit of the Jews. With many miracles he rescued them from slavery; guided them on their journey with a miraculous cloud by day and a miraculous pillar of fire by night; divided the sea that they might escape from the Egyptians; fed them with miraculous manna and supernatural quails; raised up hornets to attack their enemies; caused water to follow them wherever they wandered, and in countless ways manifested his power, and yet the Jews cared nothing

for these wonders. Not one of them seems to have been convinced that Jehovah had done anything for the people.

In spite of all these miracles, the Jews had more confidence in a golden calf, made by themselves, than in Jehovah. The reason of this is that the miracles were never performed, and never invented until hundreds of years after those who had wandered over the desert of Sinai were dust.

The miracles attributed to Christ had no effect. No human being seems to have been convinced by them. Those whom he raised from the dead, cured of leprosy, or blindness, failed to become his followers. Not one of them appeared at his trial. Not one offered to bear witness of his miraculous power.

To this there is but one explanation: The miracles were never performed. These stories were the growth of centuries. The casting out of devils; the changing of water into wine; feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes; resisting the devil; using a fish for a pocket-book; curing the blind with clay and saliva; stilling the tempest; walking on the water; the resurrection and ascension, happened, and only happened, in the imaginations of men who were not born until several generations after Christ was dead.

In those days the world was filled with ignorance and fear. Miracles happened every day. The supernatural was expected. Gods were continually interfering with the affairs of this world. Everything was told except the truth, everything believed except the facts. History was a circumstantial account of occurrences that never occurred. Devils and goblins and ghosts were as plentiful as saints. The bones of the dead were used to cure the living. Cemeteries were hospitals, and corpses were physicians. The saints practised magic, the pious communed with God in dreams, and the course of events was changed by prayer. The credulous demanded the marvellous, the miraculous, and the priests supplied

the demand. The sky was full of signs, omens of death and disaster, and the darkness thick with devils endeavouring to mislead and enslave the souls of men.

Our fathers thought that everything had been made for man, and that demons and gods gave their entire attention to this world. The people believed that they were the sport and prey, the favourites or victims, of these phantoms. And they also believed that the Creator, the God, could be influenced by sacrifice, by prayers and ceremonies.

This has been the mistake of the world. All the temples have been reared, all the altars erected, all the sacrifices offered, all the prayers uttered in vain. No god has interfered, no prayer has been answered, no help received from heaven. Nothing was created; nothing has happened for, or with reference to, man. If not a human being lived—if all were in their graves—the sun would continue to shine; the wheeling world would still pursue its flight; violets would spread their velvet bosoms to the day; the spendthrift roses give their perfume to the air; the climbing vines would hide with leaf and flower the fallen and the dead; the changing seasons would come and go; time would repeat the poem of the year; storms would wreck, and whispering rains repair; Spring, with deft and unseen hands, would weave her robes of green; life, with countless lips, would seek fair Summer's swelling breasts; Autumn would reap the wealth of leaf and fruit and seed; Winter, the artist, would etch in frost the pines and ferns; while Wind and Wave and Fire, old architects, with ceaseless toil, would still destroy and build, still wreck and change, and from the dust of death produce again the throb and breath of life.

## V.

A few years ago a few men began to think, to investigate, to reason. They began to doubt the legends of the Church, the miracles of the past. They began to notice what happened. They found that



eclipses came at certain intervals, and that their coming could be foretold. They became satisfied that the conduct of men had nothing to do with eclipses, and that the stars moved in their orbits unconscious of the sons of men. Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler destroyed the astronomy of the Bible, and demonstrated that the "inspired" story of creation could not be true, and that the Church was as ignorant as the priests were dishonest.

They found that the myth makers were mistaken; that the sun and stars did not revolve about the earth; that the firmament was not solid; that the earth was not flat; and that the so-called philosophy of the theologians was absurd and idiotic.

The stars became witnesses against the creeds of superstition.

With the telescope the heavens were explored. The New Jerusalem could not be found.

It had faded away.

The Church persecuted the astronomers and denied the facts. In February, in the year of grace sixteen hundred, the Catholic Church, the "Triumphant Beast," having in her hands, her paws, the keys of heaven and hell, accused Giordano Bruno of having declared that there were other worlds than this. He was tried, convicted, imprisoned in a dungeon for seven years. He was offered his liberty if he would recant. Bruno, the Atheist, the philosopher, refused to stain his soul by denying what he believed to be true. He was taken from his cell by the priests, by those who loved their enemies, led to the place of execution. He was clad in a robe on which representations of devils had been painted—the devils that were soon to claim his soul. He was chained to a stake, and about his body the wood was piled. Then priests, followers of Christ, lighted the fagots and flames, consumed the greatest, the most perfect, martyr that ever suffered death.

And yet the Italian agent of God, the

infallible Leo XIII., only a few years ago, denounced Bruno, the "bravest of the brave," as a coward.

The Church murdered him, and the Pope maligned his memory. Fagot and falsehood—two weapons of the Church.

A little while ago a few men began to examine rocks and soils, mountains, islands, reefs, and seas. They noticed the valleys and deltas that had been formed by rivers; the many strata of lava that had been changed to soil; the vast deposits of metals and coal; the immense reefs that the coral had formed; the work of glaciers in the far past; the production of soil by the disintegration of rock, by the growth and decay of vegetation, and the countless evidences of the countless ages through which the earth has passed. The geologists read the history of the world written by wave and flame, attested by fossils, by the formation of rocks, by mountain ranges, by volcanoes, by rivers, islands, continents, and seas.

The geology of the Bible, of the "divinely inspired" Church, of the "infallible" Pope, was found to be utterly false and foolish.

The earth became a witness against the creeds of superstition.

Then came Watt and Galvani, with the miracles of steam and electricity, while countless inventors created the wonderful machines that do the work of the world. Investigation took the place of credulity. Men became dissatisfied with huts and rags, with crusts and creeds. They longed for the comforts, the luxuries of life. The intellectual horizon enlarged; new truths were discovered; old ideas were thrown aside; the brain was developed; the heart civilised, and science was born. Humboldt, La Place, and hundreds of others explained the phenomena of nature, called attention to the ancient and venerable mistakes of sanctified ignorance, and added to the sum of knowledge. Darwin and Haeckel gave their conclusions to the world. Men began to really think, the myths began to fade, the miracles to grow mean



and small, and the great structure known as theology fell with a crash.

Science denies the truth of myth and miracle, denies that human testimony can substantiate the miraculous, denies the existence of the supernatural. Science asserts the absolute, the unvarying uniformity of nature. Science insists that the present is the child of all the past; that no power can change the past; and that nature is forever the same.

The chemist has found that just so many atoms of one kind unite with just so many of another—no more, no less, always the same. No caprice in chemistry; no interference from without.

The astronomers know that the planets remain in their orbits—that their forces are constant. They know that light is forever the same, always obeying the angle of incidence, travelling with the same rapidity—casting the same shadow, under the same circumstances, in all worlds. They know that the eclipses will occur at the times foretold—neither hastening nor delaying. They know that the attraction of gravitation is always the same, always in perfect proportion to mass and distance, neither weaker nor stronger, unvarying for ever. They know that the facts in nature cannot be changed or destroyed, and that the qualities of all things are eternal.

The men of science know that the atomic integrity of the metals is always the same, that each metal is true to its nature, and that the particles cling to each other with the same tenacity—the same force. They have demonstrated the persistence of force, that it is for ever active, for ever the same, and that it cannot be destroyed.

These great truths have revolutionised the thought of the world.

Every art, every employment, all study, all experiment, the value of experience, of judgment, of hope—all rest on a belief in the uniformity of nature, on the eternal persistence and indestructibility of force.

Break one link in the infinite chain of cause and effect, and the Master of

Nature appears. The broken link would become the throne of a god.

The uniformity of nature denies the supernatural, and demonstrates that there is no interference from without. There is no place, no office, left for gods. Ghosts fade from the brain, and the shrivelled deities fall palsied from their thrones.

The uniformity of nature renders a belief in "special providence" impossible. Prayer becomes a useless agitation of the air, and religious ceremonies are but motions, pantomimes, mindless and meaningless.

The naked savage, worshipping a wooden god, is the religious equal of the robed pope kneeling before an image of the Virgin. The poor African who carries roots and bark to protect himself from evil spirits is on the same intellectual plane of one who sprinkles his body with "holy water."

All the creeds of Christendom, all the religions of the heathen world, are equally absurd. The cathedral, the mosque, and the joss-house have the same foundation. Their builders do not believe in the uniformity of nature, and the business of all priests is to induce a so-called infinite being to change the order of events, to make causes barren of effects, and to produce effects without, and in spite of, natural causes. They all believe in the unthinkable, and pray for the impossible.

Science teaches us that there was no creation, and that there can be no destruction. The infinite denies creation and defies destruction. An infinite person, an "infinite being," is an infinite impossibility. To conceive of such a being is beyond the power of the mind. Yet all religions rest upon the supposed existence of the unthinkable, the inconceivable. And the priests of these religions pretend to be perfectly familiar with the designs, will, and wishes of this unthinkable, this inconceivable.

Science teaches that that which really is has always been, that behind every effect is the efficient and necessary

cause, that there is in the universe neither chance nor interference, and that energy is eternal. Day by day the authority of the theologian grows weaker and weaker. As the people become intelligent, they care less for preachers and more for teachers. Their confidence in knowledge, in thought, and investigation increases. They are eager to know the discoveries, the useful truths, the important facts made, ascertained, and demonstrated by the explorers in the domain of the natural. They are no longer satisfied with the platitudes of the pulpit and the assertions of theologians. They are losing confidence in the "sacred Scriptures," and in the protecting power and goodness of the supernatural. They are satisfied that credulity is not a virtue, and that investigation is not a crime.

Science is the providence of man, the worker of true miracles, of real wonders. Science has "read a little in Nature's infinite book of secrecy." Science knows the circuits of the winds, the courses of the stars. Fire is his servant, and lightning his messenger. Science freed the slaves and gave liberty to their masters. Science taught man to enchain not his fellows, but the forces of nature—forces that have no backs to be scarred, no limbs for chains to chill and eat; forces that have no hearts to break; forces that never know fatigue; forces that shed no tears. Science is the great physician. His touch has given sight. He has made the lame to leap, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and in the pallid face his hand has set the rose of health. Science has given his beloved sleep, and wrapped in happy dreams the throbbing nerves of pain. Science is the destroyer of disease, the builder of happy homes, the preserver of life and love. Science is the teacher of every virtue, the enemy of every vice. Science has given the true basis of morals, the origin and office of conscience; revealed the nature of obligation, of duty, of virtue in its highest, noblest forms; and has demonstrated that true happiness is the only possible good. Science has

slain the monsters of superstition, and destroyed the authority of inspired books. Science has read the records of the rocks—records that priestcraft cannot change—and on his wondrous scales has weighed the atom and the star.

Science has founded the only true religion. Science is the only Saviour of this world.

## VI.

For many ages religion has been tried. For countless centuries man has sought for help from heaven. To soften the heart of God, mothers sacrificed their babes; but the God did not hear, did not see, and did not help. Naked savages were devoured by beasts, bitten by serpents, killed by flood and frost. They prayed for help, but their God was deaf. They built temples and altars, employed priests, and gave of their substance; but the volcano destroyed and the famine came. For the sake of God millions murdered their fellow-men, but the God was silent. Millions of martyrs died for the honour of God, but the God was blind. He did not see the flames, the scaffolds. He did not hear the prayers, the groans. Thousands of priests in the name of God tortured their fellow-men, stretched them on racks, crushed their feet in iron boots, tore out their tongues, extinguished their eyes. The victims implored the protection of God, but their God did not hear, did not see. He was deaf and blind. He was willing that his enemies should torture his friends.

Nations tried to destroy each other for the sake of God, and the banner of the cross, dripping with blood, floated over a thousand fields; but the God was silent. He neither knew nor cared. Pestilence covered the earth with dead, the priests prayed, the altars were heaped with sacrifices; but the God did not see, did not hear. The miseries of the world did not lessen the joys of heaven. The clouds gave no rain, the famine came; withered babes with pallid lips sought the breasts of dead mothers, while starving fathers knelt and prayed; but the God



did not hear. Through many centuries millions were enslaved, babes were sold from mothers, husbands from wives, backs were scarred with the lash. The poor wretches lifted their clasped hands towards heaven and prayed for justice, for liberty ; but their God did not hear. He cared nothing for the sufferings of slaves, nothing for the tears of wives and mothers, nothing for the agony of men. He answered no prayers. He broke no chains. He freed no slaves.

The miserable wretches appealed to the priests of God, but they were on the other side. They defended the masters. The slaves had nothing to give.

During all these years it was claimed by the theologians that their God was governing the world ; that he was infinitely powerful, wise, and good ; and that the "powers" of the earth were "ordained" by him. During all these years the Church was the enemy of progress. It hated all physicians, and told the people to rely on prayer, amulets, and relics. It persecuted the astronomers and geologists, denounced them as infidels and atheists, as enemies of the human race. It poisoned the fountains of learning, and insisted that teachers should distort the facts in nature to the end that they might harmonise with the "inspired" book. During all these years the Church misdirected the energies of man, and when it reached the zenith of its power darkness fell upon the world.

In all nations and in all ages religion has failed. The gods have never interfered. Nature has produced and destroyed without mercy and without hatred. She has cared no more for man than for the leaves of the forest, no more for nations than for hills of ants, nothing for right or wrong, for life or death, for pain or joy.

Man, through his intelligence, must protect himself. He gets no help from any other world. The Church has always claimed, and still claims, that it is the only reforming power ; that it makes men honest, virtuous, and merciful ; that it prevents violence and war ; and that

without its influence the race would return to barbarism.

Nothing can exceed the absurdity of these claims.

If we wish to improve the condition of mankind, if we wish for nobler men and women, we must develop the brain, we must encourage thought and investigation. We must convince the world that credulity is a vice ; that there is no virtue in believing without or against evidence ; and that the really honest man is true to himself. We must fill the world with intellectual light. We must applaud mental courage. We must educate the children, rescue them from ignorance and crime. School-houses are the real temples, and teachers are the true priests. We must supply the wants of the mind, satisfy the hunger of the brain. The people should be familiar with the great poets—with the tragedies of Æschylus, the dramas of Shakespeare, with the poetry of Homer and Virgil. Shakespeare should be taught in every school, found in every house.

Through photography the whole world may become acquainted with the great statues, the great paintings, the victories of art. In this way the mind is enlarged, the sympathies quickened, the appreciation of the beautiful intensified, the taste refined, and the character ennobled.

The great novels should be read by all. All should be acquainted with the men and women of fiction, with the ideal world. The imagination should be developed, trained, and strengthened. Superstition has degraded art and literature. It gave us winged monsters ; scenes from heaven and hell ; representations of gods and devils ; sculptured the absurd and painted the impossible in the name of Art. It gave us the dreams of the insane ; the lives of fanatical saints ; accounts of miracles and wonders ; of cures wrought by the bones of the dead ; descriptions of paradise, purgatory, and the eternal dungeon ; discourses on baptism ; on changing wine and wafers into the blood and flesh of God ; on the forgiveness of sins by priests ; on fore-



ordination and accountability, predestination and free will; on devils, ghosts, and goblins; the ministrations of guardian angels; the virtue of belief and the wickedness of doubt. And this was called "sacred literature."

The Church taught that those who believed, counted beads, mumbled prayers, and gave their time or property for the support of the gospel, were the good, and that all others were travelling the "broad road" to eternal pain. According to the theologians, the best people, the saints, were dead, and real beauty was to be found only in heaven. They denounced the joys of life as husks and filthy rags; declared that the world had been cursed, and that it brought forth thistles and thorns because of the sins of man. They regarded the earth as a kind of dock, running out into the sea of eternity, on which the pious waited for the ship on which they were to be transported to another world.

But the real poets and the real artists clung to this world, to this life. They described and represented things that exist. They expressed thoughts of the brain, emotions of the heart, the griefs and joys, the hope and despair, of men and women. They found strength and beauty on every hand. They found their angels here. They were true to human experience, and they touched the brain and heart of the world. In the tragedies and comedies of life, in the smiles and tears, in the ecstasies of love, in the darkness of death, in the dawn of hope, they found their materials for statue and song, for poem and painting. Poetry and art are the children of this world, born and nourished here. They are human. They have left the winged monsters of heaven, the malicious deformities of hell, and have turned their attention to men and women, to the things of this life.

There is a poem called *The Skylark*, by Shelley, graceful as the motions of flames. Another by Robert Burns, called *The Daisy*, exquisite, perfect as the pearl of virtue in the beautiful breast

of a loving girl. Between this lark and this daisy, neither above nor below, you will find all the poetry of the world. Eloquence, sublimity, poetry, and art must have the foundation of fact, of reality. Imaginary worlds and beings are nothing to us.

At last the old creeds are becoming cruel and vulgar. We now have imagination enough to put ourselves in the place of others. Believers in hell, in eternal pain, like murderers, lack imagination. The murderer has not imagination enough to see his victim dead. He does not see the sightless and pathetic eyes. He does not see the widow's arms about the corpse, her lips upon the dead. He does not hear the sobs of children. He does not see the funeral. He does not hear the clods as they fall on the coffin. He does not feel the hand of arrest; the scene of the trial is not before him. He does not hear the awful verdict, the sentence of the court, the last words. He does not see the scaffold, nor feel about his throat the deadly noose.

Let us develop the brain, civilise the heart, and give wings to the imagination.

## VII.

If we abandon myth and miracle, if we discard the supernatural and the scheme of redemption, how are we to civilise the world?

Is falsehood a reforming power? Is credulity the mother of virtue? Is there any saving grace in the impossible and absurd? Did wisdom perish with the dead? Must the civilised accept the religion of savages?

If we wish to reform the world, we must rely on truth, on fact, on reason. We must teach men that they are good or bad for themselves; that others cannot be good or bad for them; that they cannot be charged with the crimes, or credited with the virtues, of others. We must discard the doctrine of the atonement, because it is absurd and immoral. We are not accountable for the sins of "Adam," and the virtues of Christ

cannot be transferred to us. There can be no vicarious virtue, no vicarious vice. Why should the sufferings of the innocent atone for the crimes of the guilty? According to the doctrine of the Atonement, right and wrong do not exist in the nature of things, but in the arbitrary will of the Infinite. This is a subversion of all ideas of justice and mercy.

An act is good, bad, or indifferent, according to its consequences. No power can step between an act and its natural consequences. A governor may pardon the criminal, but the natural consequences of the crime remain untouched. A god may forgive, but the consequences of the act forgiven are still the same. We must teach the world that the consequences of a bad action cannot be avoided; that they are the invisible police, the unseen avengers, that accept no gifts, that hear no prayers, that no cunning can deceive.

We do not need the forgiveness of gods, but of ourselves and the ones we injure. Restitution without repentance is far better than repentance without restitution.

We know nothing of any god who rewards, punishes, or forgives.

We must teach our fellow-men that honour comes from within, not from without; that honour must be earned; that it is not alms; that even an infinite God could not enrich the beggar's palm with the gem of honour.

Teach them also that happiness is the bud, the blossom, and the fruit of good and noble actions; that it is not the gift of any god; that it must be earned by man—must be deserved.

In this world of ours there is no magic, no sleight-of-hand, by which consequences can be made to punish the good and reward the bad.

Teach men not to sacrifice this world for some other, but to turn their attention to the natural, to the affairs of this life. Teach them that theology has no known foundation; that it was born of ignorance and fear; that it has hardened the heart, polluted the imagination, and made fiends of men.

Theology is not for this world. It is no part of real religion. It has nothing to do with goodness or virtue. Religion does not consist in worshipping gods, but in adding to the well-being, the happiness, of man. No human being knows whether any god exists or not, and all that has been said and written about "our god" or the gods of other people has no known fact for a foundation. Words without thoughts, clouds without rain.

Let us put theology out of religion.

Church and State should be absolutely divorced. Priests pretend that they have been selected by, and that they get their power from, God. Kings occupy their thrones in accordance with the will of God. The Pope declares that he is the agent, the deputy, of God, and that by right he should rule the world. All these pretensions and assertions are perfectly absurd, and yet they are acknowledged and believed by millions. Get theology out of government, and kings will descend from their thrones. All will admit that governments get their powers from the consent of the governed, and that all persons in office are the servants of the people. Get theology out of government, and chaplains will be dismissed from legislatures, from congress, from the army and navy. Get theology out of government, and people will be allowed to express their honest thoughts about "inspired books" and superstitious creeds. Get theology out of government, and priests will no longer steal a seventh of our time. Get theology out of government, and the clergy will soon take their places with augurs and soothsayers, with necromancers and medicine men.

Get theology out of education. Nothing should be taught in a school that somebody does not know. There are plenty of things to be learned about this world, about this life. Every child should be taught to think, and that it is dangerous not to think. Children should not be taught the absurdities, the cruelties, and imbecilities of superstition. No



Church should be allowed to control the common school, and public money should not be divided between the hateful and warring sects. The public school should be secular, and only the useful should be taught. Many of our colleges are under the control of Churches. Presidents and professors are mostly ministers of the gospel, and the result is that all facts inconsistent with the creeds are either suppressed or denied. Only those professors who are naturally stupid or mentally dishonest can retain their places. Those who tell the truth, who teach the facts, are discharged.

In every college truth should be a welcome guest. Every professor should be a finder, and every student a learner, of facts. Theology and intellectual dishonesty go together. The teacher of children should be intelligent and perfectly sincere.

Let us get theology out of education.

The pious denounce the secular schools as godless. They should be. The sciences are all secular, all godless. Theology bears the same relation to science that the black art does to chemistry, that magic does to mathematics. It is something that cannot be taught, because it cannot be known. It has no foundation in fact. It neither produces, nor accords with, any image in the mind. It is not only unknowable, but unthinkable. Through hundreds and thousands of generations men have been discussing, wrangling, and fighting about theology. No advance has been made. The robed priest has only reached the point from which the savage tried to start.

We know that theology always has made, and always will make, enemies. It sows the seeds of hatred in families and nations. It is selfish, cruel, revengeful, and malicious. It has heaven for the few and perdition for the many. We now know that credulity is not a virtue, and that intellectual courage is. We must stop rewarding hypocrisy and bigotry. We must stop persecuting the

thinkers, the investigators, the creators of light, the civilisers of the world.

### VIII.

Will the unknown, the mysteries of life and death, the world that lies beyond the limitations of the mind, for ever furnish food for superstition? Will the gods and ghosts perish or simply retreat before the advancing hosts of science, and continue to crouch and lurk just beyond the horizon of the known? Will darkness for ever be the womb and mother of the supernatural?

A little while ago priests told peasants that the New Jerusalem, the celestial city, was just above the clouds. They said that its walls and domes and spires were just beyond the reach of human sight. The telescope was invented, and those who looked at the wilderness of stars saw no city, no throne. They said to the priests: "Where is your New Jerusalem?" The priests cheerfully and confidently replied: "It is just beyond where you see."

At one time it was believed that a race of men existed "with their heads beneath their shoulders." Returning travellers from distant lands were asked about these wonderful people, and all replied that they had not seen them. "Oh," said the believers in the monsters, "the men with heads beneath their shoulders live in a country that you did not visit." And so the monsters lived and flourished until all the world was known. We cannot know the universe. We cannot travel infinite distances, and so, somewhere in shoreless space, there will always be room for gods and ghosts, for heavens and hells. And so it may be that superstition will live and linger until the world becomes intelligent enough to build upon the foundation of the known, to keep the imagination within the domain of the probable, and to believe in the natural—*until the supernatural shall have been demonstrated.*

Savages knew all about gods, about heavens and hells, before they knew anything about the world in which they



lived. They were perfectly familiar with evil spirits, with the invisible phantoms of the air, long before they had any true conception of themselves. So they knew all about the origin and destiny of the human race. They were absolutely certain about the problems the solution of which, philosophers know, is beyond the limitations of the mind. They understood astrology, but not astronomy; knew something of magic, but nothing about chemistry. They were wise only as to those things about which nothing can be known.

The poor Indian believed in the "Great Spirit," and saw "design" on every hand. Trees were made that he might have bows and arrows, wood for his fire, and bark for his wigwam; rivers and lakes to give him fish; wild beasts and corn that he might have food; and the animals had skins that he might have clothes.

Primitive peoples all reasoned in the same way, and modern Christians follow their example. They knew but little of the world, and thought that it had been made expressly for the use of man. They did not know that it was mostly water; that vast regions were locked in eternal ice; and that in most countries the conditions were unfavourable to human life. They knew nothing of the countless enemies of man that live unseen in water, food, and air. Back of the little good they knew they put gods, and back of the evil, devils. They thought it of the greatest importance to gain the good will of the gods, who alone could protect them from the devils. Those who worshipped these gods, offered sacrifices, and obeyed priests, were considered loyal members of the tribe or community, and those who refused to worship were regarded as enemies and traitors. The believers, in order to protect themselves from the anger of the gods, exiled or destroyed the infidels.

Believing as they did, the course they pursued was natural. They wished not only to protect themselves from disease

and death, from pestilence and famine in this world, but the souls of their children from eternal pain in the next. Their gods were savages who demanded flattery and worship not only, but the acceptance of a certain creed. As long as Christians believe in eternal punishment, they will be the enemies of those who investigate and contend for the authority of reason, of those who demand evidence, who care nothing for the unsupported assertions of the dead or the illogical inferences of the living.

Science always has been, is, and always will be, modest, thoughtful, truthful. It has but one object: the ascertainment of truth. It has no prejudice, no hatred. It is in the realm of the intellect, and cannot be swayed or changed by passion. It does not try to please God, to gain heaven, or avoid hell. It is for this world, for the use of man. It is perfectly candid. It does not try to conceal, but to reveal. It is the enemy of mystery, of pretence, and cant. It does not ask people to be solemn, but sensible. It calls for and insists on the use of all the senses, of all the faculties of the mind. It does not pretend to be "holy" or "inspired." It courts investigation, criticism, and even denial. It asks for the application of every test, for trial by every standard. It knows nothing of blasphemy, and does not ask for the imprisonment of those who ignorantly or knowingly deny the truth. The good that springs from a knowledge of the truth is the only reward it offers, and the evil resulting from ignorance is the only punishment it threatens. Its effort is to reform the world through intelligence.

On the other hand, theology is, always has been, and always will be, ignorant, arrogant, puerile, and cruel. When the Church had power, hypocrisy was crowned and honesty imprisoned. Fraud wore the tiara, and truth was a convict. Liberty was in chains. Theology has always sent the worst to heaven, the best to hell.

Let me give you a scene from the Day

of Judgment. Christ is upon his throne, his secretary by his side. A soul appears. This is what happens:—

"What is your name?"

"Torquemada."

"Were you a Christian?"

"I was."

"Did you endeavour to convert your fellow-men?"

"I did. I tried to convert them by persuasion, by preaching, and praying, and even by force."

"What did you do?"

"I put the heretics in prison, in chains. I tore out their tongues, put out their eyes, crushed their bones, stretched them upon racks, roasted their feet, and, if they remained obdurate, I flayed them alive or burned them at the stake."

"And did you do all this for my glory?"

"Yes, all for you. I wanted to save some; I wanted to protect the young and the weak-minded."

"Did you believe the Bible, the miracles—that I was God, that I was born of a virgin, and kept money in the mouth of a fish?"

"Yes, I believed it all. My reason was the slave of faith."

"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joys of thy Lord. I was hungry, and you gave me meat; naked, and you clothed me."

Another soul arises.

"What is your name?"

"Giordano Bruno."

"Were you a Christian?"

"At one time I was; but for many years I was a philosopher, a seeker after truth."

"Did you seek to convert your fellow-men?"

"Not to Christianity, but to the religion of reason. I tried to develop their minds, to free them from the slavery of ignorance and superstition. In my day the Church taught the holiness of credulity—the virtue of unquestioning obedience—and in your name tortured and destroyed the intelligent and coura-

geous. I did what I could to civilise the world, to make men tolerant and merciful, to soften the hearts of priests, and banish torture from the world. I expressed my honest thoughts, and walked in the light of reason."

"Did you believe the Bible, the miracles? Did you believe that I was God, that I was born of a virgin, and that I suffered myself to be killed by the Jews to appease the wrath of God—that is, of myself—so that God could save the souls of a few?"

"No, I did not; I did not believe that God was ever born into my world, or that God learned the trade of a carpenter, or that he 'increased in knowledge,' or that he cast devils out of men, or that his garments could cure diseases, or that he allowed himself to be murdered, and in the hour of death 'forsook' himself. These things I did not and could not believe. But I did all the good I could. I enlightened the ignorant, comforted the afflicted, defended the innocent, divided even my poverty with the poor, and did the best I could to increase the happiness of my fellow-men. I was a soldier in the army of progress. I was arrested, imprisoned, tried, and convicted by the Church—by the 'Triumphant Beast.' I was burned at the stake by ignorant and heartless priests, and my ashes given to the winds."

Then Christ, his face growing dark, his brows contracted with wrath, with uplifted hands, with half-averted face, cries, or rather shrieks: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

This is the justice of God—the mercy of the compassionate Christ. This is the belief, the dream and hope of the orthodox theologian—"the consummation devoutly to be wished."

Theology makes God a monster, a tyrant, a savage; makes man a servant, a serf, a slave; promises heaven to the obedient, the meek, the frightened; and threatens the self-reliant with the tortures of hell.

It denounces reason, and appeals to

the passions—to hope and fear. It does not answer the arguments of those who attack, but resorts to sophistry, falsehood, and slander. It is incapable of advancement. It keeps its back to the sunrise, lives on myth and miracle, and guards with a miser's care the "sacred" superstitions of the past.

In the great struggle between the supernatural and the natural, between gods and men, we have passed midnight. All the forces of civilisation, all the facts that have been found, all the truths that have been discovered, are the allies of science—the enemies of the supernatural.

We need no myths, no miracles, no gods, no devils.

### IX.

For thousands of generations the myths have been taught and the miracles believed. Every mother was a missionary, and told with loving care the falsehoods of "faith" to her babe. The poison of superstition was in the mother's milk. She was honest and affectionate, and her character, her goodness, her smiles and kisses, entered into, mingled with, and became a part of the superstition that she taught. Fathers, friends, and priests united with the mothers, and the children thus taught became the teachers of their children, and so the creeds were kept alive.

Childhood loves the romantic, the mysterious, the monstrous. It lives in a world where cause has nothing to do with effect, where the fairy waves her hand and the prince appears, where wish creates the thing desired and facts become the slaves of amulet and charm. The individual lives the life of the race, and the child is charmed with what the race in its infancy produced.

There seems to be the same difference between mistakes and facts that there is between weeds and corn. Mistakes seem to take care of themselves, while the facts have to be guarded with all possible care. Falsehoods, like weeds, flourish without care. Weeds care nothing for soil or rain. They not only

ask no help, but they almost defy destruction. In the minds of children, superstitions, legends, myths, and miracles find a natural and, in most instances, a lasting home. Thrown aside in manhood, forgotten or denied, in old age they oft return and linger to the end.

This in part accounts for the longevity of religious lies. Ministers, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, ask the man who is thinking for himself how he can be wicked and heartless enough to attack the religion of his mother. This question is regarded by the clergy as unanswerable. Of course, it is not to be asked, by the missionaries, of the Hindoos and the Chinese. The heathen are expected to desert the religion of their mothers as Christ and his apostles deserted the religion of their mothers. It is right for Jews and heathen, but not for thinkers and philosophers.

A cannibal was about to kill a missionary for food. The missionary objected, and asked the cannibal how he could be so cruel and wicked.

The cannibal replied that he followed the example of his mother. "My mother," said he, "was good enough for me. Her religion is my religion. The last time I saw her she was sitting, propped up against a tree, eating cold missionary."

But now the mother argument has mostly lost its force, and men of mind are satisfied with nothing less than truth.

The phenomena of nature have been investigated, and the supernatural has not been found. The myths have faded from the imagination, and of them nothing remains but the poetic. The miraculous has become the absurd, the impossible. Gods and phantoms have been driven from the earth and sky. We are living in a natural world.

Our fathers, some of them, demanded the freedom of religion. We have taken another step: we demand the Religion of Freedom.

O Liberty, thou art the god of my idolatry! Thou art the only deity that hateth bended knees. In thy vast and



unwalled temple, beneath the roofless dome, star-gemmed and luminous with suns, thy worshippers stand erect! They do not cringe, or crawl, or bend their foreheads to the earth. The dust has never borne the impress of their lips. Upon thy altars mothers do not sacrifice their babes, nor men their rights. Thou askest naught from man except the things that good men hate—the whip, the chain,

the dungeon key. Thou hast no popes, no priests, who stand between their fellow-men and thee. Thou carest not for foolish forms or selfish prayers. At thy sacred shrine hypocrisy does not bow, virtue does not tremble, superstition's feeble tapers do not burn, but Reason holds aloft her inextinguishable torch, whose holy light will one day flood the world.

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A LAY SERMON<sup>1</sup>

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—In the greatest tragedy that has ever been written by man, in the fourth scene of the third act, is the best prayer that I have ever read; and when I say “the greatest tragedy,” everybody familiar with Shakespeare will know that I refer to *King Lear*. After he has been on the heath, touched with insanity, coming suddenly to the place of shelter, he says:—

I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

And this prayer is my text:—

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your unhoused heads, your unfed  
sides,  
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend  
you  
From seasons such as these? Oh, I have  
ta'en  
Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

That is one of the noblest prayers that ever fell from human lips. If nobody has too much, everybody will have enough!

I propose to say a few words upon subjects that are near to us all, and in which every human being ought to be interested; and if he is not, it may be that his wife will be, it may be that his orphans will be; and I would like to see this world at last so that a man could die and not feel that he left his wife and children a prey to the greed, the avarice, or the cruelties of mankind. There is something wrong in a government where they who do the most have the least. There is something wrong when honesty wears a rag, and rascality a robe; when the loving, the tender, eat a crust, while the infamous sit at banquets. I cannot do much, but I can at least sympathise

with those who suffer. There is one thing that we should remember at the start, and if I can only teach you that to-night—unless you know it already—I shall consider the few words I may have to say a wonderful success.

I want you to remember that everybody is as he *must* be. I want you to get out of your minds the old nonsense of “free moral agency”; and then you will have charity for the whole human race. When you know that they are not responsible for their dispositions any more than for their height; not responsible for their acts any more than for their dreams; when you finally understand the philosophy that everything exists as the result of an efficient cause, and that the lightest fancy that ever fluttered its painted wings in the horizon of hope was as necessarily produced as the planet that in its orbit wheels about the sun—when you understand this, I believe you will have charity for all mankind, including even yourself.

Wealth is not a crime; poverty is not a virtue, although the virtuous have generally been poor. There is only one good, and that is human happiness; and he only is a wise man who makes himself and others happy.

I have heard all my life about self-denial. There never was anything more idiotic than that. No man who does right practises self-denial. To do right is the bud and blossom and fruit of wisdom. To do right should always be dictated by the highest possible selfishness and the most perfect generosity. No man practises self-denial unless he does wrong. To inflict an injury upon yourself is an act of self-denial. He who denies justice to another denies it to himself. To plant seeds that will

<sup>1</sup> Delivered before the Congress of the American Secular Union at Chickering Hall, New York, November 14th, 1886.

for ever bear the fruit of joy is not an act of self-denial. So this idea of doing good to others only for their sake is absurd. You want to do it, not simply for their sake, but for your own ; because a perfectly civilised man can never be perfectly happy while there is one unhappy being in this universe.

Let us take another step. The barbaric world was to be rewarded in some other world for acting sensibly in this. They were promised rewards in another world if they would only have self-denial enough to be virtuous in this. If they would forego the pleasures of larceny and murder ; if they would forego the thrill and bliss of meanness here, they would be rewarded hereafter for that self-denial. I have exactly the opposite idea. Do right, not to deny yourself, but because you love yourself and because you love others. Be generous, because it is better for you. Be just, because any other course is the suicide of the soul. Whoever does wrong plagues himself, and when he reaps that harvest he will find that he was not practising self-denial when he did right.

If you want to be happy yourself, if you are truly civilised, you want others to be happy. Every man ought, to the extent of his ability, to increase the happiness of mankind, for the reason that that will increase his own. No one can be really prosperous unless those with whom he lives share the sunshine and the joy.

The first thing a man wants to know and be sure of is when he has got enough. Most people imagine that the rich are in heaven ; but, as a rule, it is only a gilded hell. There is not a man in the city of New York with genius enough, with brains enough, to own five millions of dollars. Why ? The money will own him. He becomes the key to a safe. That money will get him up at daylight ; that money will separate him from his friends ; that money will fill his heart with fear ; that money will rob his days of sunshine and his nights of

pleasant dreams. He cannot own it. He becomes the property of that money. And he goes right on making more. What for ? He does not know. It becomes a kind of insanity. No one is happier in a palace than in a cabin. I love to see a log-house. It is associated in my mind always with pure, unalloyed happiness. It is the only house in the world that looks as though it had no mortgage on it. It looks as if you could spend there long, tranquil autumn days ; the air filled with serenity ; no trouble, no thoughts about notes, about interest, nothing of the kind ; just breathing free air, watching the hollyhocks, listening to the birds and to the music of the spring that comes like a poem from the earth.

It is an insanity to get more than you want. Imagine a man in this city, an intelligent man, say, with two or three millions of coats, eight or ten millions of hats, vast warehouses full of shoes, billions of neckties ; and imagine that man getting up at four o'clock in the morning, in the rain and snow and sleet, working like a dog all day to get another necktie ! Is not that exactly what the man of twenty or thirty millions, or of five millions, does to-day ? Wearing his life out that somebody may say : " How rich he is ! " What can he do with the surplus ? Nothing. Can he eat it ? No. Make friends ? No. Purchase flattery and lies ? Yes. Make all his poor relations hate him ? Yes. And then, what worry ! Annoyed, nervous, tormented, until his poor little brain becomes inflamed, and you see in the morning paper " Died of apoplexy." This man finally began to worry for fear he would not have enough neckties to last him through.

So we ought to teach our children that great wealth is a curse. Great wealth is the mother of crime. On the other hand are the abject poor. And let me ask to-night : Is the world for ever to remain as it was when Lear made his prayer ? Is it ever to remain as it is now ? I hope not. Are there always to be millions whose lips are white with



famine? Is the withered palm to be always extended, imploring from the stony heart of respectable charity alms? Must every man who sits down to a decent dinner always think of the starving? Must every one sitting by the fireside think of some poor mother, with a child strained to her breast, shivering in the storm? I hope not. Are the rich always to be divided from the poor—not only in fact, but in feeling? And that division is growing more and more every day. The gulf between Lazarus and Dives widens year by year, only their positions are changed—Lazarus is in hell, and he thinks Dives is in the bosom of Abraham.

And there is one thing that helps to widen this gulf. In nearly every city of the United States you will find the fashionable part and the poor part. The poor know nothing of the fashionable part, except the outside splendour; and as they go by the palaces that poison plant called envy springs and grows in their poor hearts. The rich know nothing of the poor, except the squalor and rags and wretchedness, and what they read in the police records, and they say, "Thank God, we are not like those people!" Their hearts are filled with scorn and contempt, and the hearts of the others with envy and hatred. There must be some way devised for the rich and poor to get acquainted. The poor do not know how many well-dressed people sympathise with them, and the rich do not know how many noble hearts beat beneath the rags. If we can ever get the loving poor acquainted with the sympathising rich, this question will be nearly solved.

In a hundred other ways they are divided. If anything should bring mankind together, it ought to be a common belief. In Catholic countries that does have a softening influence upon the rich and upon the poor. They believe the same. So in Mohammedan countries they can kneel in the same mosque, and pray to the same God. But how is it with us? The Church is not free.

There is no welcome in the velvet for the velvetten. Poverty does not feel at home there, and the consequence is the rich and poor are kept apart, even by their religion. I am not saying anything against religion. I am not on that question; but I would think more of any religion provided that even for one day in the week, or for one hour in the year, it allowed wealth to clasp the hand of poverty, and to have, for one moment even, the thrill of genuine friendship.

In the olden times, in barbaric life, it was a simple thing to get a living. A little hunting, a little fishing, pulling a little fruit, and digging for roots—all simple; and they were nearly all on an equality, and comparatively there were fewer failures. Living has at last become complex. All the avenues are filled with men struggling for the accomplishment of the same thing:—

For emulation hath a thousand sons  
That one by one pursue, if you give way,  
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright:  
Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,  
And leave you hindmost;  
Or, like a gallant horse, fallen in first rank,  
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear.

The struggle is so hard. And just exactly as we have risen in the scale of being, the per-centage of failures has increased. It is so that all men are not capable of getting a living. They have not cunning enough, intellect enough, muscle enough—they are not strong enough. They are too generous or they are too negligent; and then some people seem to have what is called "bad luck"—that is to say, when anything falls, they are under it; when anything bad happens, it happens to them.

And now there is another trouble. Just as life becomes complex, and as everyone is trying to accomplish certain objects, all the ingenuity of the brain is at work to get there by a shorter way, and, in consequence, this has become an age of invention. Myriads of machines have been invented—every one of them to save labour. If these machines helped the labourer, what a blessing they would be! But the labourer does

not own the machine; the machine owns him. That is the trouble. In the olden time, when I was a boy, even, you know how it was in the little towns. There was a shoemaker—two of them—a tailor or two, a blacksmith, a wheelwright. I remember just how the shops used to look. I used to go to the blacksmith's shop at night, get up on the forge, and hear the men talk about turning horse-shoes. Many a night have I seen the sparks fly and heard the stories that were told. There was a great deal of human nature in those days! Everybody was known. If times got hard, the poor little shoemakers made a living mending, half-soleing, straightening up the heels. The same with the blacksmith; the same with the tailor. They could get credit, they did not have to pay till the next January; and if they could not pay then, they took another year, and they were happy enough. Now one man is not a shoemaker. There is a great building, several hundred thousand dollars' worth of machinery, three or four thousand people—not a single mechanic in the whole building. One sews on straps, another greases the machines, cuts out soles, waxes threads. And what is the result? When the machines stop, three thousand men are out of employment. Credit goes. Then come want and famine, and if they happen to have a little child die it would take them years to save enough of their earnings to pay the expense of putting away that little sacred piece of flesh. And yet by this machinery we can produce enough to flood the world. By the inventions in agricultural machinery the United States can feed all the mouths upon the earth. There is not a thing that man uses that cannot instantly be over-produced to such an extent as to become almost worthless; and yet, with all this production, with all this power to create, there are millions and millions in abject want. Granaries bursting, and famine looking into the doors of the poor! Millions of everything, and yet millions wanting everything and having substantially nothing!

Now, there is something wrong there. We have got into that contest between machines and men, and if extravagance does not keep pace with ingenuity it is going to be the most terrible question that man has ever settled. I tell you to-night that these things are worth thinking about. Nothing that touches the future of our race, nothing that touches the happiness of ourselves or our children, should be beneath our notice. We should think of these things—must think of them—and we should endeavour to see that justice is finally done between man and man.

My sympathies are with the poor. My sympathies are with the working men of the United States. Understand me distinctly. I am not an anarchist. Anarchy is the reaction from tyranny. I am not a Socialist. I am not a Communist. I am an Individualist. I do not believe in tyranny of government, but I do believe in justice as between man and man.

What is the remedy? Or what can we think of?—for do not imagine that I think I know. It is an immense, an almost infinite, question, and all we can do is to guess. You have heard a great deal lately upon the land subject. Let me say a word or two upon that. In the first place, I do not want to take, and I would not take, an inch of land from any human being that belonged to him. If we ever take it, we must pay for it—do not rob anybody. Whenever any man advocates justice and robbery as the means I suspect him.

No man should be allowed to own any land that he does not use. Everybody knows that—I do not care whether he has thousands or millions. I have owned a great deal of land, but I know just as well as I know I am living that I should not be allowed to have it unless I use it. And why? Don't you know that if people could bottle the air they would? Don't you know that there would be an American air-bottling association? And don't you know that they would allow thousands and millions to die for want



of breath if they could not pay for air? I am not blaming anybody. I am just telling how it is. Now, the land belongs to the children of nature. Nature invites into this world every babe that is born. And what would you think of me, for instance, to-night, if I had invited you here—nobody had charged you anything, but you had been invited—and when you got here you had found one man pretending to occupy a hundred seats, another fifty, and another seventy-five, and thereupon you were compelled to stand up—what would you think of the invitation? It seems to me that every child of nature is entitled to his share of the land, and that he should not be compelled to beg the privilege to work the soil of a babe that happened to be born before him. And why do I say this? Because it is not to our interest to have a few landlords and millions of tenants.

The tenement house is the enemy of modesty, the enemy of virtue, the enemy of patriotism. Home is where the virtues grow. I would like to see the law so that every home, to a small amount, should be free not only from sale for debts, but should be absolutely free from taxation, so that every man could have a home. Then we will have a nation of patriots.

Now, suppose that every man were to have all the land he is able to buy. The Vanderbilts could buy to-day all the land that is in farms in the State of Ohio—every foot of it. Would it be for the best interest of that State to have a few landlords and four or five millions of serfs? So I am in favour of a law finally to be carried out, not by robbery, but by compensation, under the right, as the lawyers call it, of eminent domain—so that no person would be allowed to own more land than he uses. I am not blaming these rich men for being rich. I pity the most of them. I had rather be poor, with a little sympathy in my heart, than to be rich as all the mines on earth and not have that little flower of pity in my breast. I do not see how a

man can have hundreds of millions and pass every day people that have not enough to eat. I do not understand it. I might be just the same way myself. There is something in money that dries up the sources of affection, and the probability is it is this: The moment a man gets money so many men are trying to get it away from him that in a little while he regards the whole human race as his enemy, and he generally thinks that they could be rich, too, if they would only attend to business as he has. Understand, I am not blaming these people. There is a good deal of human nature in us all. You remember the story of the man who made a speech at a Socialist meeting, and closed it by saying, "Thank God I am no monopolist," but as he sank to his seat said, "But I wish to the Lord I was!" We must remember that these rich men are naturally produced. Do not blame them; blame the system.

Certain privileges have been granted to the few by the Government, ostensibly for the benefit of the many; and whenever that grant is not for the good of the many it should be taken from the few—not by force, not by robbery, but by estimating fairly the value of that property, and paying to them its value; because everything should be done according to law and in order.

What remedy, then, is there? First, the great weapon in this country is the ballot. Each voter is a sovereign. There the poorest is the equal of the richest. His vote will count just as many as though the hand that cast it controlled millions. The poor are in the majority in this country. If there is any law that oppresses them, it is their fault. They have followed the fife and drum of some party. They have been misled by others. No man should go an inch with a party—no matter if that party is half the world, and has in it the greatest intellects of the earth—unless that party is going his way. No honest man should ever turn round to join anything. If it overtakes him, good. If he has to hurry up a little to get to it, good. But do not go with



anything that is not going your way ; no matter whether they call it Republican, or Democrat, or Progressive Democracy, do not go with it unless it goes your way.

The ballot is the power. The law should settle many of these questions between capital and labour. But I expect the greatest good to come from civilisation, from the growth of a sense of justice ; for I tell you to-night, a civilised man will never want anything for less than it is worth—a civilised man when he sells a thing will never want more than it is worth ; a really and truly civilised man would rather be cheated than to cheat. And yet, in the United States, good as we are, nearly everybody wants to get everything for a little less than it is worth, and the man that sells it to him wants to get a little more than it is worth, and this breeds rascality on both sides. That ought to be done away with. There is one step towards it that we will take : we will finally say that human flesh, human labour, shall not depend entirely on “supply and demand.” That is infinitely cruel. Every man should give to another according to his ability to give ; and enough that he may make his living and lay something by for the winter of old age.

Go to London, the greatest city of this world, where there is the most wealth, the greatest glittering piles of gold. And yet one out of every six in that city dies in a hospital, a workhouse, or a prison. Is that the best that we are ever to know ? Is that the last word that civilisation has to say ? Look at the women in this town sewing for a living, making cloaks for less than forty-five cents that sell for forty-five dollars ! Right here—here, amid all the palaces, amid the thousands of millions of property—here ! Is that all that civilisation can do ? Must a poor woman support herself, or her child, or her children, by that kind of labour and with such pay ; and do we call ourselves civilised ?

Did you ever read that wonderful poem about the sewing woman ? Let me tell you the last verse :—

Winds that have sainted her, tell ye the story  
Of the young life by the needle that bled,  
Making a bridge over death's soundless waters  
Out of a swaying and soul-cutting thread.  
Over it going, all the world knowing  
That thousands have trod it, foot-bleeding  
before ;  
God protect all of us ! God pity all of us,  
Should she look back from the opposite  
shore !

I cannot call this civilisation. There must be something nearer a fairer division in this world.

You can never get it by strikes. Never. The first strike that is a great success will be the last, because the people who believe in law and order will put the strikers down. The strike is no remedy. Boycotting is no remedy. Brute force is no remedy. These questions have to be settled by reason, by candour, by intelligence, by kindness ; and nothing is permanently settled in this world that has not for its corner-stone justice, and is not protected by the profound conviction of the human mind.

This is no country for Anarchy, no country for Communism, no country for the Socialist. Why ? Because the political power is equally divided. What other reason ? Speech is free. What other ? The press is untrammelled. And that is all that the right should ever ask—a free press, free speech, and the protection of person. That is enough. That is all I ask. In a country like Russia, where every mouth is a bastille and every tongue a convict, there may be some excuse. Where the noblest and the best are driven to Siberia, there may be a reason for the Nihilist. In a country where no man is allowed to petition for redress there is a reason, but not here. This—say what you will against it—this is the best Government ever founded by the human race ! Say what you will of parties, say what you will of dishonesty, the holiest flag that ever kissed the air is ours !

Only a few years ago morally we were a low people, before we abolished slavery ; but now, when there is no chain except that of custom, when every man has an opportunity, this is the

grandest Government of the earth. There is hardly a man in the United States to-day of any importance, whose voice anybody cares to hear, who was not nursed at the loving breast of poverty. Look at the children of the rich. My God, what a punishment for being rich! So, whatever happens, let every man say that this Government, and this form of government, shall stand.

"But," say some, "these working men are dangerous." I deny it. We are all in their power. They run all the cars. Our lives are in their hands almost every day. They are working in all our homes. They do the labour of this world. We are all at their mercy, and yet they do not commit more crimes, according to number, than the rich. Remember that I am not afraid of them. Neither am I afraid of the monopolists, because under our institutions, when they become hurtful to the general good, the people will stand it just to a certain point, and then comes the end—not in anger, not in hate, but from a love of liberty and justice.

Now, we have in this country another class. We call them "criminals." Let me take another step:—

'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,  
But to support him after.

Recollect what I said in the first place—that every man is as he must be. Every crime is a necessary product. The seeds were all sown, the land thoroughly ploughed, the crop well attended to, and carefully harvested. Every crime is born of necessity. If you want less crime, you must change the conditions. Poverty makes crime. Want, rags, crusts, failure, misfortune—all these awake the wild beast in man, and finally he takes, and takes contrary to law, and becomes a criminal. And what do you do with him? You punish him. Why not punish a man having the consumption? The time will come when you will see that that is just as logical. What do you do with the criminal? You send him to the penitentiary. Is he made better? Worse. The first thing you do is to try

to trample out his manhood by putting an indignity upon him. You mark him. You put him in stripes. At night you put him in darkness. His feeling for revenge grows. You make a wild beast of him, and he comes out of that place branded in body and soul, and then you won't let him reform if he wants to. You put on airs above him because he has been in the penitentiary. The next time you look with scorn upon a convict let me beg of you to do one thing. Maybe you are not as bad as I am, but do one thing: Think of all the crimes you have wanted to commit; think of all the crimes you would have committed if you had had the opportunity; think of all the temptations to which you would have yielded had nobody been looking; and then put your hand on your heart and say whether you can justly look with contempt even upon a convict.

None but the noblest should inflict punishment, even on the basest.

Society has no right to punish any man in revenge, no right to punish any man except for two objects—one, the prevention of crime; the other the reformation of the criminal. How can you reform him? Kindness is the sunshine in which virtue grows. Let it be understood by these men that there is no revenge; let it be understood, too, that they can reform. Only a little while ago I read of a case of a young man who had been in a penitentiary and came out. He kept it a secret, and went to work for a farmer. He got in love with the daughter, and wanted to marry her. He had nobility enough to tell the truth—he told the father that he had been in the penitentiary. The father said: "You cannot have my daughter, because it would stain her life." The young man said: "Yes, it would stain her life, therefore I will not marry her." He went out. In a few moments afterwards they heard the report of a pistol, and he was dead. He left just a little note saying: "I am through. There is no need of my living longer, when I stain with my life the one I love." And yet we call



our society civilised. There is a mistake.

I want that question thought of. I want all my fellow-citizens to think of it. I want you to do what you can to do away with all cruelty. There are, of course, some cases that have to be treated with what might be called almost cruelty; but if there is the smallest seed of good in any human heart, let kindness fall upon it until it grows, and in that way I know, and so do you, that the world will get better and better day by day.

Let us, above all things, get acquainted with each other. Let every man teach his son, teach his daughter, that labour is honourable. Let us say to our children: It is your business to see that you never become a burden on others. Your first duty is to take care of yourselves, and if there is a surplus, with that surplus help your fellow-man. You owe it to yourself above all things not to be a burden upon others. Teach your son that it is his duty not only, but his highest joy, to become a home-builder, a home-owner. Teach your children that the fireside is the happiest place in this world. Teach them that whoever is an idler, whoever lives upon the labour of others, whether he is a pirate or a king, is a dishonourable person. Teach them that no civilised man wants anything for nothing, or for less than it is worth; that he wants to go through this world paying his way as he goes, and if he gets a little ahead, an extra joy, it should be divided with another, if the other is doing something for himself. Help others to help themselves.

And let us teach that great wealth is not great happiness; that money will not purchase love; it never did and never can purchase respect; it never did and never can purchase the highest happiness. I believe with Robert Burns:—

If happiness have not her seat  
And centre in the breast,  
We may be wise, or rich, or great,  
But never can be blest.

We must teach this, and let our fellow-citizens know that we give them every right that we claim for ourselves. We must discuss these questions and have charity, and we will have it whenever we have the philosophy that all men are as they must be, and that intelligence and kindness are the only levers capable of raising mankind.

Then there is another thing. Let each one be true to himself. No matter what his class, no matter what his circumstances, let him tell his thought. Don't let his class bribe him. Don't let him talk like a banker because he is a banker. Don't let him talk like the rest of the merchants because he is a merchant. Let him be true to the human race instead of to his little business—be true to the ideal in his heart and brain, instead of to his little present and apparent selfishness; let him have a larger and more intelligent selfishness, a generous philosophy that includes not only others, but himself.

So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organisation, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or roof, or raiment, shall ever put a padlock on my lips. I have made up my mind that no hope of preferment, no honour, no wealth, shall ever make me for one moment swerve from what I really believe, no matter whether it is to my immediate interest, as one would think, or not. And while I live I am going to do what little I can to help my fellow-men who have not been as fortunate as I have been. I shall talk on their side, I shall vote on their side, and do what little I can to convince men that happiness does not lie in the direction of great wealth, but in the direction of achievement for the good of themselves and for the good of their fellow-men. I shall do what little I can to hasten the day when this earth shall be covered with homes, and when by countless firesides shall sit the happy and the loving families of the world.



## THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

### I.—THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ONE of the foundation stones of our faith is the Old Testament. If that book is not true, if its authors were unaided men, if it contains blunders and falsehoods, then that stone crumbles to dust.

The geologists demonstrated that the author of Genesis was mistaken as to the age of the world, and that the story of the universe having been created in six days about six thousand years ago could not be true.

The theologians then took the ground that the "days" spoken of in Genesis were periods of time, epochs, six "long whiles," and that the work of creation might have been commenced millions of years ago.

The change of days into epochs was considered by the believers in the Bible as a great triumph over the hosts of infidelity. The fact that Jehovah had ordered the Jews to keep the Sabbath, giving as a reason that he had made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, did not interfere with the acceptance of the "epoch" theory.

But there is still another question. How long has man been upon the earth?

According to the Bible, Adam was certainly the first man, and in his case the epoch theory cannot change the account. The Bible gives the age at which Adam died, and gives the generations to the flood, then to Abraham, and so on, and shows that from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ it was about four thousand and four years.

According to the sacred Scriptures, man has been on this earth five thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine years, *and* no more.

Is this true?

Geologists have divided a few years of the world's history into periods, reaching

from the azoic rocks to the soil of our time. With most of these periods they associate certain forms of life, so that it is known that the lowest forms of life belonged with the earliest periods, and the higher with the more recent. It is also known that certain forms of life existed in Europe many ages ago, and that many thousands of years ago these forms disappeared.

For instance, it is well established that at one time there lived in Europe, and in the British Islands, some of the most gigantic mammals, the mammoth, the woolly-haired rhinoceros, the Irish elk, elephants, and other forms that have in those countries become extinct. Geologists say that many thousands of years have passed since these animals ceased to inhabit those countries.

It was during the Drift Period that these forms of life existed in Europe and England, and that must have been hundreds of thousands of years ago.

In caves once inhabited by men have been found implements of flint and the bones of these extinct animals. With the flint tools man had split the bones of these beasts that he might secure the marrow for food.

Many such caves and hundreds of such tools and of such bones have been found. And we now know that in the Drift Period man was the companion of these extinct monsters.

It is therefore certain that many, many thousands of years before Adam lived men, women, and children inhabited the earth.

It is certain that the account in the Bible of the creation of the first man is a mistake. It is certain that the inspired writers knew nothing about the origin of man.

Let me give you another fact.

The Egyptians were astronomers. A

few years ago representations of the stars were found on the walls of an old temple, and it was discovered by calculating backward that the stars did occupy the exact positions as represented about seven hundred and fifty years before Christ. Afterwards another representation of the stars was found, and by calculating in the same way it was found that the stars did occupy the exact positions represented about three thousand eight hundred years before Christ.

According to the Bible, the first man was created four thousand and four years before Christ. If this is true, then Egypt was founded, its language formed, its arts cultivated, its astronomical discoveries made and recorded about two hundred years after the creation of the first man.

In other words, Adam was two or three hundred years old when the Egyptian astronomers made these representations.

Nothing can be more absurd.

Again I say that the writers of the Bible were mistaken.

How do I know?

According to that same Bible, there was a flood some fifteen or sixteen hundred years after Adam was created that destroyed the entire human race with the exception of eight persons, and according to the Bible the Egyptians descended from one of the sons of Noah. How, then, did the Egyptians represent the stars in the position they occupied twelve hundred years before the flood?

No one pretends that Egypt existed as a nation before the flood. Yet the astronomical representations found must have been made more than a thousand years before the world was drowned.

There is another mistake in the Bible.

According to that book, the sun was made after the earth was created.

Is this true?

Did the earth exist before the sun?

The men of science are believers in the exact opposite. They believe that the earth is a child of the sun; that the earth, as well as the other planets belonging to our constellation, came from the sun.

The writers of the Bible were mistaken.

There is another point.

According to the Bible, Jehovah made the world in six days, and the work done each day is described. What did Jehovah do on the second day?

This is the record:—

“And God said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so, and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”

The writer of this believed in a solid firmament—the floor of Jehovah’s house. He believed that the waters had been divided, and that the rain came from above the firmament. He did not understand the fact of evaporation; did not know that the rain came from the water on the earth.

Now we know that there is no firmament, and we know that the waters are not divided by a firmament. Consequently we know that, according to the Bible, Jehovah did nothing on the second day. He must have rested on Tuesday. This being so, we ought to have two Sundays a week.

Can we rely on the historical parts of the Bible?

Seventy souls went down into Egypt, and in two hundred and fifteen years increased to three millions. They could not have doubled more than four times a century. Say nine times in two hundred and fifteen years.

This makes thirty-five thousand eight hundred and forty (35,840) instead of three millions.

Can we believe the accounts of the battles?

Take one instance:—

Jereboam had an army of eight hundred thousand men, Abijah of four hundred thousand. They fought. The Lord was on Abijah’s side, and he killed

five hundred thousand of Jereboam's men.

All these soldiers were Jews, all lived in Palestine, a poor miserable little country about one-quarter as large as the State of New York. Yet one million two hundred thousand soldiers were put in the field. This required a population in the country of ten or twelve millions. Of course this is absurd. Palestine in its palmy days could not have supported two millions of people.

The soil is poor.

If the Bible is inspired, is it true?

We are told by this inspired book of the gold and silver collected by King David for the temple—the temple afterwards completed by the virtuous Solomon.

According to the blessed Bible, David collected about two thousand million dollars in silver and five thousand million dollars in gold, making a total of seven thousand million dollars.

Is this true?

There is in the Bank of France at the present time (1895) nearly six hundred million dollars, and, so far as we know, it is the greatest amount that was ever gathered together. All the gold now known, coined and in bullion, does not amount to much more than the sum collected by David.

Seven thousand millions. Where did David get this gold? The Jews had no commerce. They owned no ships. They had no great factories; they produced nothing for other countries. There were no gold or silver mines in Palestine. Where then was this gold, this silver found? I will tell you: In the imagination of a writer who had more patriotism than intelligence, and who wrote, not for the sake of truth, but for the glory of the Jews.

Is it possible that David collected nearly eight thousand tons of gold; that he by economy got together about sixty thousand tons of silver, making a total of gold and silver of sixty-eight thousand tons?

The average freight car carries about

fifteen tons. David's gold and silver would load about four thousand five hundred and thirty-three cars, making a train about thirty-two miles in length. And all this for the temple at Jerusalem, a building ninety feet long and forty-five feet high and thirty wide, to which was attached a porch thirty feet wide, ninety feet long, and one hundred and eighty feet high.

Probably the architect was inspired.

Is there a sensible man in the world who believes that David collected seven thousand million dollars' worth of gold or silver?

There is hardly five thousand million dollars of gold now used as money in the whole world. Think of the millions taken from the mines of California, Australia, and Africa during the present century, and yet the total scarcely exceeds the amount collected by King David more than a thousand years before the birth of Christ. Evidently the inspired historian made a mistake.

It required a little imagination and a few ciphers to change seven million dollars or seven hundred thousand dollars into seven thousand million dollars. Drop four ciphers, and the story becomes fairly reasonable.

The Old Testament must be thrown aside. It is no longer a foundation. It has crumbled.

## II.—THE NEW TESTAMENT.

But we have the New Testament, the sequel of the Old, in which Christians find the fulfilment of prophecies made by inspired Jews.

The New Testament vouches for the truth, the inspiration of the Old, and if the Old is false the New cannot be true.

In the New Testament we find all that we know about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

It is claimed that the writers were divinely inspired, and that all they wrote is true.

Let us see if these writers agree.

Certainly there should be no difference about the birth of Christ. From the



Christian's point of view, nothing could have been of greater importance than that event.

Matthew says: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

"Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Matthew does not tell us who these wise men were, from what country they came, to what race they belonged. He did not even know their names.

We are also informed that when Herod heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; that he gathered the chief priests and asked of them where Christ should be born, and they told him that he was to be born in Bethlehem.

Then Herod called the wise men and asked them when the star appeared, and told them to go to Bethlehem and report to him.

When they left Herod the star again appeared, and went before them until it stood over the place where the child was.

When they came to the child they worshipped him, gave him gifts, and, being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their own country without calling on Herod.

Then the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and told him to take Mary and the child into Egypt for fear of Herod.

So Joseph took Mary and the child to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.

Then Herod, finding that he was mocked by the wise men, "sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof from two years old and under."

After the death of Herod an angel again appeared in a dream to Joseph, and told him to take mother and child and go back to Palestine.

So he went back and dwelt in Nazareth.

Is this story true? Must we believe

in the star and the wise men? Who were these wise men? From what country did they come? What interest had they in the birth of the King of the Jews? What became of them and their star?

Of course I know that the Holy Catholic Church has in her keeping the three skulls that belonged to these wise men, but I do not know where the Church obtained these relics, nor exactly how their genuineness has been established.

Must we believe that Herod murdered the babes of Bethlehem?

Is it not wonderful that the enemies of Herod did not charge him with this horror? Is it not marvellous that Mark and Luke and John forgot to mention this most heartless of massacres?

Luke also gives an account of the birth of Christ. He says that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed; that this was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; that, in accordance with this decree, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to be taxed; that at that place Christ was born and laid in a manger. He also says that shepherds in the neighbourhood were told of the birth by an angel, with whom was a multitude of the heavenly host; that these shepherds visited Mary and the child, and told others what they had seen and heard.

He tells us that after eight days the child was named Jesus; that forty days after his birth he was taken by Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, and that, after they had performed all things according to the law, they returned to Nazareth. Luke also says that the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and that his parents went every year to Jerusalem.

Do the accounts in Matthew and Luke agree? Can both accounts be true?

Luke never heard of the star, and Matthew knew nothing of the heavenly host. Luke never heard of the wise men, nor Matthew of the shepherds. Luke knew nothing of the hatred of

Herod, the murder of the babes, or the flight into Egypt. According to Matthew, Joseph, warned by an angel, took Mary and the child and fled into Egypt. According to Luke, they all went to Jerusalem, and from there back to Nazareth.

Both of these accounts cannot be true. Will some Christian scholar tell us which to believe?

When was Christ born?

Luke says that it took place when Cyrenius was governor. Here is another mistake. Cyrenius was not appointed governor until after the death of Herod, and the taxing could not have taken place until ten years after the alleged birth of Christ.

According to Luke, Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth; and for the purpose of getting them to Bethlehem, so that the child could be born in the right place, the taxing under Cyrenius was used; but the writer, being "inspired," made a mistake of about ten years as to the time of the taxing and of the birth.

Matthew says nothing about the date of the birth, except that he was born when Herod was king. It is now known that Herod had been dead ten years before the taxing under Cyrenius. So, if Luke tells the truth, Joseph, being warned by an angel, fled from the hatred of Herod ten years after Herod was dead. If Matthew and Luke are both right, Christ was taken to Egypt ten years before he was born, and Herod killed the babes ten years after he was dead.

Will some Christian scholar have the goodness to harmonise these "inspired" accounts?

There is another thing.

Matthew and Luke both try to show that Christ was of the blood of David, that he was a descendant of that virtuous king.

As both of these writers were inspired, and as both received their information from God, they ought to agree.

According to Matthew, there were between David and Jesus twenty-seven generations, and he gives all the names.

According to Luke, there were between David and Jesus forty-two generations, and he gives all the names.

In these genealogies—both inspired—there is a difference between David and Jesus, a difference of some fourteen or fifteen generations.

Besides, the names of all the ancestors are different, with two exceptions.

Matthew says that Joseph's father was Jacob. Luke says that Heli was Joseph's father.

Both of these genealogies cannot be true, and the probability is that both are false.

There is not in all the pulpits ingenuity enough to harmonise these ignorant and stupid contradictions.

There are many curious mistakes in the words attributed to Christ.

We are told in Matthew, chapter xxiii., verse 35, that Christ said:

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

It is certain that these words were not spoken by Christ. He could not by any possibility have known that the blood of Zacharias had been shed. As a matter of fact, Zacharias was killed by the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and this siege took place seventy-one years after the birth of Christ, thirty-eight years after he was dead.

There is still another mistake.

Zacharias was not the son of Barachias—no such Zacharias was killed. The Zacharias that was slain was the son of Baruch.

But we must not expect the "inspired" to be accurate.

Matthew says that at the time of the crucifixion "the graves were opened, and that many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves *after* his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

According to this, the graves were opened at the time of the crucifixion;

but the dead did not arise and come out until after the resurrection of Christ.

They were polite enough to sit in their open graves and wait for Christ to rise first.

To whom did these saints appear? What became of them? Did they slip back into their graves and commit suicide?

Is it not wonderful that Mark, Luke, and John never heard of these saints?

What kind of saints were they? Certainly they were not Christian saints.

So the inspired writers do not agree in regard to Judas.

Certainly the inspired writers ought to have known what happened to Judas, the betrayer. Matthew, being duly "inspired," says that when Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned he repented, and took back the money to the chief priests and elders, saying that he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood. They said to him: "What is that to us? See thou to that." Then Judas threw down the pieces of silver, and went and hanged himself.

The chief priests then took the pieces of silver and bought the potter's field to bury strangers in, and it is called the field of blood.

We are told in Acts of the Apostles that Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said: "Now this man [Judas] purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and, falling headlong, he burst asunder and all his bowels gushed out. That field is called the field of blood."

Matthew says Judas repented and gave back the money.

Peter says that he bought a field with the money.

Matthew says that Judas hanged himself. Peter says that he fell down and burst asunder. Which of these accounts is true?

Besides, it is hard to see why Christians hate, loathe, and despise Judas. According to their scheme of salvation, it was absolutely necessary that Christ should be killed, necessary that he should be betrayed; and had it not been for

Judas, all the world, including Christ's mother, and the part of Christ that was human, would have gone to hell.

Yet, according to the New Testament, Christ did not know that one of his disciples was to betray him.

Jesus, when on his way to Jerusalem for the last time, said, speaking to the twelve disciples, Judas being present, that they, the disciples, should thereafter sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Yet, more than a year before this journey, John says that Christ said, speaking to the twelve disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And John adds: "He spake of Judas Iscariot, for it was he that should betray him."

Why did Christ a year afterwards tell Judas that he should sit on a throne and judge one of the tribes of Israel?

There is still another trouble.

Paul says that Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to the twelve disciples. According to Paul, Jesus appeared to Judas with the rest.

Certainly Paul had not heard the story of the betrayal.

Why did Christ select Judas as one of his disciples, knowing that he would betray him? Did he desire to be betrayed? Was it his intention to be put to death?

Why did he fail to defend himself before Pilate?

According to the accounts, Pilate wanted to save him. Did Christ wish to be convicted?

The Christians are compelled to say that Christ intended to be sacrificed, that he selected Judas with that end in view, and that he refused to defend himself because he desired to be crucified. All this is in accordance with the horrible idea that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

### III.—JEHOVAH.

God the Father.

The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the God of the Christians.



He it was who created the universe, who made all substance, all force, all life, from nothing. He it is who has governed and still governs the world. He has established and destroyed empires and kingdoms, despotisms and republics. He has enslaved and liberated the sons of men. He has caused the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

This shows his goodness.

He has caused his volcanoes to devour the good and the bad, his cyclones to wreck and rend the generous and the cruel, his floods to drown the loving and the hateful, his lightning to kill the virtuous and the vicious, his famines to starve the innocent and criminal, and his plagues to destroy the wise and good, the ignorant and wicked. He has allowed his enemies to imprison, to torture, and to kill his friends. He has permitted blasphemers to flay his worshippers alive, to dislocate their joints upon racks, and to burn them at the stake. He has allowed men to enslave their brothers, and to sell babes from the breasts of mothers.

This shows his impartiality.

The pious negro who commenced his prayer, "O thou great and unscrupulous God," was nearer right than he knew.

Ministers ask: Is it possible for God to forgive man?

And when I think of what has been suffered, of the centuries of agony and tears, I ask: Is it possible for man to forgive God?

How do Christians prove the existence of their God? Is it possible to think of an infinite being? Does the word God correspond with any image in the mind? Does the word God stand for what we know, or for what we do not know?

Is not this unthinkable God a guess, an inference?

Can we think of a being without form, without body, without parts, without passions? Why should we speak of a being without body as of the masculine gender?

Why should the Bible speak of this

God as a man? Of his walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, of his talking, hearing, and smelling? If he has no passions, why is he spoken of as jealous, revengeful, angry, pleased, and loving?

In the Bible God is spoken of as a person in the form of man, journeying from place to place, as having a home and occupying a throne. These ideas have been abandoned, and now the Christian's God is the infinite, the incomprehensible, the formless, bodiless, and passionless.

Of the existence of such a being there can be, in the nature of things, no evidence.

Confronted with the universe, with fields of space sown thick with stars, with all there is of life, the wise man, being asked the origin and destiny of all, replies: "I do not know. These questions are beyond the powers of my mind." The wise man is thoughtful and modest. He clings to facts. Beyond his intellectual horizon he does not pretend to see. He does not mistake hope for evidence, or desire for demonstration. He is honest. He neither deceives himself nor others.

The theologian arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and he calls this God. The scientist arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and calls it the Unknown.

The theologian insists that his inconceivable governs the world; that it, or he, or they, can be influenced by prayers and ceremonies; that it, or he, or they, punishes and rewards; that it, or he, or they, has priests and temples.

The scientist insists that the Unknown is not changed, so far as he knows, by prayers of people or priests. He admits that he does not know whether the Unknown is good or bad, whether he, or it, wants, or whether he, or it, is worthy of worship. He does not say that the Unknown is God, that it created substance and force, life and thought. He simply says that of the Unknown he knows nothing.

Why should Christians insist that a God of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power governs the world?

Why did he allow millions of his children to be enslaved? Why did he allow millions of mothers to be robbed of their babes? Why has he allowed injustice to triumph? Why has he permitted the innocent to be imprisoned and the good to be burned? Why has he withheld his rain and starved millions of the children of men? Why has he allowed the volcanoes to destroy, the earthquakes to devour, and the tempest to wreck and rend?

#### IV.—THE TRINITY.

The New Testament informs us that Christ was the son of Joseph and the son of God, and that Mary was his mother.

How is it established that Christ was the son of God?

It is said that Joseph was told so in a dream by an angel.

But Joseph wrote nothing on that subject—said nothing, so far as we know. Mary wrote nothing, said nothing. The angel that appeared to Joseph or that informed Joseph said nothing to anybody else. Neither has the Holy Ghost, the supposed father, ever said or written one word. We have received no information from the parties who could have known anything on the subject. We get all our facts from those who could not have known.

How is it possible to prove that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ?

Who knows that such a being as the Holy Ghost ever existed?

How was it possible for Mary to know anything about the Holy Ghost?

How could Joseph know that he had been visited by an angel in a dream?

Could he know that the visitor was an angel? It all occurred in a dream, and poor Joseph was asleep. What is the testimony of one who was asleep worth?

All the evidence we have is that somebody who wrote part of the New Testament says that the Holy Ghost was the

father of Christ, and that somebody who wrote another part of the New Testament says that Joseph was the father of Christ.

Matthew and Luke give the genealogy, and both show that Christ was the son of Joseph.

The "Incarnation" has to be believed without evidence. There is no way in which it can be established. It is beyond the reach and realm of reason. It defies observation, and is independent of experience.

It is claimed not only that Christ was the Son of God, but that he was, and is, God.

Was he God before he was born? Was the body of Mary the dwelling-place of God?

What evidence have we that Christ was God?

Somebody has said that Christ claimed that God was his father, and that he and his father were one. We do not know who this somebody was, and do not know from whom he received his information.

Somebody who was "inspired" has said that Christ was of the blood of David through his father Joseph.

This is all the evidence we have.

Can we believe that God, the creator of the universe, learned the trade of a carpenter in Palestine; that he gathered a few disciples about him, and, after teaching for about three years, suffered himself to be crucified by a few ignorant and pious Jews?

Christ, according to the faith, is the second person in the Trinity, the Father being the first and the Holy Ghost the third. Each of these three persons is God. Christ is his own father and his own son. The Holy Ghost is neither father nor son, but both. The son was begotten by the father, but existed before he was begotten—just the same before as after. Christ is just as old as his father, and the father is just as young as his son. The Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and Son, but was equal to the Father and Son before he proceeded—

that is to say, before he existed ; but he is of the same age as the other two.

So, it is declared that the Father is God, and the Son God and the Holy Ghost God, and that these three Gods make one God.

According to the celestial multiplication table, once one is three, and three times one is one ; and, according to heavenly subtraction, if we take two from three, three are left. The addition is equally peculiar : if we add two to one, we have but one. Each one is equal to himself and the other two. Nothing ever was, nothing ever can be, more perfectly idiotic and absurd than the dogma of the Trinity.

How is it possible to prove the existence of the Trinity ?

Is it possible for a human being who has been born but once to comprehend or to imagine the existence of three beings each of whom is equal to the three ?

Think of one of these beings as the father of one, and think of that one as half human and all God, and think of the third as having proceeded from the other two, and then think of all three as one. Think that, after the father begot the son, the father was still alone, and, after the Holy Ghost proceeded from the father and the son, the father was still alone—because there never was and never will be but one God.

At this point, absurdity having reached its limit, nothing more can be said except, "Let us pray."

#### V.—THE THEOLOGICAL CHRIST.

In the New Testament we find the teachings and sayings of Christ. If we say that the book is inspired, then we must admit that Christ really said all the things attributed to him by the various writers. If the book is inspired, we must accept it all. We have no right to reject the contradictory and absurd, and accept the reasonable and good. We must take it all just as it is.

My own observation has led me to believe that men are generally consistent

in their theories and inconsistent in their lives.

So, I think that Christ in his utterances was true to his theory, to his philosophy.

If I find in the Testament sayings of a contradictory character, I conclude that some of those sayings were never uttered by him. The sayings that are, in my judgment, in accordance with what I believe to have been his philosophy I accept, and the others I throw away.

There are some of his sayings which show him to have been a devout Jew ; others that he wished to destroy Judaism ; others showing that he held all people except the Jews in contempt, and that he wished to save no others ; others showing that he wished to convert the world ; still others showing that he was forgiving, self-denying, and loving ; others that he was revengeful and malicious ; others that he was an ascetic, holding all human ties in utter contempt.

The following passages show that Christ was a devout Jew :—

"Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is his holy city."

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

"For after all these things (clothing, food, and drink) do the Gentiles seek."

So, when he cured a leper, he said : "Go thy way, show thyself unto the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."

Jesus sent his disciples forth, saying : "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

A woman came out of Canaan and cried to Jesus : "Have mercy on me ; my daughter is sorely vexed with a devil." But he would not answer. Then the disciples asked him to send her away, and he said : "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then the woman worshipped him and said : "Lord help me." But he answered



and said: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs." Yet for her faith he cured her child.

So, when the young man asked him what he must do to be saved, he said: "Keep the commandments."

Christ said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

Christ went into the temple and cast out them that sold and bought there, and said: "It is written, my house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

"We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

Certainly all these passages were written by persons who regarded Christ as the Messiah.

Many of the sayings attributed to Christ show that he was an ascetic, that he cared nothing for kindred, nothing for father and mother, nothing for brothers or sisters, and nothing for the pleasures of life.

Christ said to a man: "Follow me." The man said: "Let me go and bury my father." Christ answered: "Let the dead bury the dead." Another said: "I will follow thee, but first let me go and bid them farewell which are at home."

Jesus said: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off."

One said unto him: "Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee." And he answered: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren."

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands for my

name's sake shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Christ, it seems, had a philosophy.

He believed that God was a loving father, that he would take care of his children, that they need do nothing except to rely implicitly on God.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on..... For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Ask, and it shall be given you. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. The very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Christ seemed to rely absolutely on the protection of God until the darkness of death gathered about him, and then he cried: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

While there are many passages in the New Testament showing Christ to have been forgiving and tender, there are many others showing that he was exactly the opposite.

What must have been the spirit of one who said: "I am come to send fire on the earth. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law"?

"If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

This passage built dungeons and lighted fagots.

"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

"I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

All these sayings could not have been uttered by the same person. They are inconsistent with each other. Love does not speak the words of hatred. The real philanthropist does not despise all nations but his own. The teacher of universal forgiveness cannot believe in eternal torture.

From the interpolations, legends, accretions, mistakes, and falsehoods in the New Testament is it possible to free the actual man? Clad in mist and myth, hidden by the draperies of gods, deformed, indistinct as faces in clouds, is it possible to find and recognise the features, the natural face, of the actual Christ?

For many centuries our fathers closed their eyes to the contradictions and inconsistencies of the Testament, and in spite of their reason harmonised the interpolations and mistakes.

This is no longer possible. The contradictions are too many, too glaring. There are contradictions of fact, not only, but of philosophy, of theory.

The accounts of the trial, the crucifixion, and ascension of Christ do not agree. They are full of mistakes and contradictions.

According to one account, Christ ascended the day of, or the day after, his resurrection. According to another, he remained forty days after rising from the dead. According to one account, he was seen after his resurrection only by a few women and his disciples. Accord-

ing to another, he was seen by the women, by his disciples on several occasions, and by hundred of others.

According to Matthew, Luke, and Mark, Christ remained for the most part in the country, seldom going to Jerusalem. According to John, he remained mostly in Jerusalem, going occasionally into the country, and then generally to avoid his enemies.

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Christ taught that if you would forgive others God would forgive you. According to John, Christ said that the only way to get to heaven was to believe on him and be born again.

These contradictions are gross and palpable, and demonstrate that the New Testament is not inspired, and that many of its statements must be false.

If we wish to save the character of Christ, many of the passages must be thrown away.

We must discard the miracles or admit that he was insane or an impostor. We must discard the passages that breathe the spirit of hatred and revenge, or admit that he was malevolent.

If Matthew was mistaken about the genealogy of Christ, about the wise men, the star, the flight into Egypt, and the massacre of the babes by Herod, then he may have been mistaken in many passages that he put in the mouth of Christ.

The same may be said in regard to Mark, Luke, and John.

The Church must admit that the writers of the New Testament were uninspired men, that they made many mistakes, that they accepted impossible legends as historical facts, that they were ignorant and superstitious, that they put malevolent, stupid, insane, and unworthy words in the mouth of Christ, described him as the worker of impossible miracles, and in many ways stained and belittled his character.

The best that can be said about Christ is that nearly nineteen centuries ago he was born in the land of Palestine, in a country without wealth, without

commerce, in the midst of a people who knew nothing of the greater world, a people enslaved, crushed by the mighty power of Rome; that this babe, this child of poverty and want, grew to manhood without education, knowing nothing of art, or science, and at about the age of thirty began wandering about the hills and hamlets of his native land, discussing with priests, talking with the poor and sorrowful, writing nothing, but leaving his words in the memory or forgetfulness of those to whom he spoke; that he attacked the religion of his time because it was cruel; that this excited the hatred of those in power, and that Christ was arrested, tried, and crucified.

For many centuries this great Peasant of Palestine has been worshipped as God.

Millions and millions have given their lives to his service. The wealth of the world was lavished on his shrines. His name carried consolation to the diseased and dying. His name dispelled the darkness of death, and filled the dungeon with light. His name gave courage to the martyr; and, in the midst of fire, with shrivelling lips the sufferer uttered it again and again. The outcasts, the deserted, the fallen, felt that Christ was their friend, felt that he knew their sorrows and pitied their sufferings.

The poor mother, holding her dead babe in her arms, lovingly whispered his name. His gospel has been carried by millions to all parts of the globe, and his story has been told by the self-denying and faithful to countless thousands of the sons of men. In his name have been preached charity, forgiveness, and love.

He it was who, according to the faith, brought immortality to light, and many millions have entered the valley of the shadow with their hands in his.

All this is true, and, if it were all, how beautiful, how touching, how glorious it would be. But it is not all. There is another side.

In his name millions and millions of men and women have been imprisoned,

tortured, and killed. In his name millions and millions have been enslaved. In his name the thinkers, the investigators, have been branded as criminals, and his followers have shed the blood of the wisest and best. In his name the progress of many nations was stayed for a thousand years. In his gospel was found the dogma of eternal pain, and his words added an infinite horror to death. His gospel filled the world with hatred and revenge; made intellectual honesty a crime; made happiness here the road to hell, denounced love as base and bestial, canonised credulity, crowned bigotry, and destroyed the liberty of man.

It would have been far better had the New Testament never been written—far better had the theological Christ never lived. Had the writers of the Testament been regarded as uninspired, had Christ been thought of only as a man, had the good been accepted, and the absurd, the impossible, and the revengeful thrown away, mankind would have escaped the wars, the tortures, the scaffolds, the dungeons, the agony and tears, the crimes and sorrows of a thousand years.

#### VI.—THE "SCHEME."

We have also the scheme of redemption.

According to this "scheme," by the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden human nature became evil, corrupt, and depraved. It became impossible for human beings to keep, in all things, the law of God. In spite of this, God allowed the people to live and multiply for some fifteen hundred years, and then, on account of their wickedness, drowned them all with the exception of eight persons.

The nature of these eight persons was evil, corrupt, and depraved, and in the nature of things their children would be cursed with the same nature. Yet God gave them another trial, knowing exactly what the result would be. A few of these wretches he selected, and made them objects of his love and care—the



rest of the world he gave to indifference and neglect. To civilise the people he had chosen he assisted them in conquering and killing their neighbours, and gave them the assistance of priests and inspired prophets. For their preservation and punishment he wrought countless miracles, gave them many laws and a great deal of advice. He taught them to sacrifice oxen, sheep, and doves to the end that their sins might be forgiven. The idea was inculcated that there was a certain relation between the sin and the sacrifice—the greater the sin, the greater the sacrifice. He also taught the savagery that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin.

In spite of all his efforts, the people grew gradually worse. They would not, they could not, keep his laws.

A sacrifice had to be made for the sins of the people. The sins were too great to be washed out by the blood of animals or men. It became necessary for God himself to be sacrificed. All mankind were under the curse of the law. Either all the world must be lost or God must die.

In only one way could the guilty be justified, and that was by the death, the sacrifice, of the innocent. And the innocent being sacrificed must be great enough to atone for the world. There was but one such being—God.

Thereupon God took upon himself flesh, was born into the world, was known as Christ, was murdered, sacrificed by the Jews, and became an atonement for the sins of the human race.

This is the scheme of Redemption—the atonement.

It is impossible to conceive of anything more utterly absurd.

A man steals, and then sacrifices a dove, or gives a lamb to a priest. His crime remains the same. He need not kill something. Let him give back the thing stolen, and in future live an honest life.

A man slanders his neighbour, and then kills an ox. What has that to do

with the slander? Let him take back his slander, make all the reparation that he can, and let the ox alone.

There is no sense in sacrifice, never was and never will be.

Make restitution, reparation, undo the wrong, and you need shed no blood.

A good law, one springing from the nature of things, cannot demand, and cannot accept, and cannot be satisfied with, the punishment or the agony of the innocent. A god could not accept his own sufferings in justification of the guilty. This is a complete subversion of all ideas of justice and morality. A god could not make a law for man, then suffer in the place of the man who had violated it, and say that the law had been carried out and the penalty duly enforced. A man has committed murder, has been tried, convicted, and condemned to death. Another man goes to the governor, and says that he is willing to die in place of the murderer. The governor says: "All right, I accept your offer; a murder has been committed, somebody must be hung, and your death will satisfy the law."

But that is not the law. The law says, not that somebody shall be hanged, but that the murderer shall suffer death.

Even if the governor should die in the place of the criminal, it would be no better. There would be two murders instead of one, two innocent men killed, one by the first murderer and one by the State, and the real murderer free.

This Christians call "satisfying the law."

## VII.—BELIEF.

We are told that all who believe in this scheme of redemption, and have faith in the redeemer, will be rewarded with eternal joy. Some think that men can be saved by faith without works, and some think that faith and works are both essential; but all agree that without faith there is no salvation. If you repent and believe on Jesus Christ, then his goodness will be imparted to you, and the penalty of the law, so far as

you are concerned, will be satisfied by the sufferings of Christ.

You may repent and reform, you may make restitution, you may practise all the virtues; but without this belief in Christ the gates of heaven will be shut against you forever.

Where is this heaven? The Christians do not know.

Does the Christian go there at death, or must he wait for the general resurrection? They do not know.

The Testament teaches that the bodies of the dead are to be raised. Where are their souls in the meantime? They do not know.

Can the dead be raised? The atoms composing their bodies enter into new combinations, into new forms, into wheat and corn, into the flesh of animals, and into the bodies of other men. Where one man dies, and some of his atoms pass into the body of another man, and he dies, to whom will these atoms belong in the day of resurrection?

If Christianity were only stupid and unscientific, if its God was ignorant and kind, if it promised eternal joy to believers, and if the believers practised the forgiveness they teach, for one I should let the faith alone.

But there is another side to Christianity. It is not only stupid, but malicious. It is not only unscientific, but it is heartless. Its God is not only ignorant, but infinitely cruel. It not only promises the faithful an eternal reward, but declares that nearly all of the children of men imprisoned in the dungeons of God will suffer eternal pain. This is the savagery of Christianity. This is why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, and its selfish, heartless heaven.

Christians believe in infinite torture, in eternal pain.

Eternal pain!

All the meanness of which the heart of man is capable is in that one word—Hell.

That word is a den, a cave, in which crawl the slimy reptiles of revenge.

That word certifies to the savagery of primitive man.

That word is the depth, the dungeon, the abyss, from which civilised man has emerged.

That word is the disgrace, the shame, the infamy, of our revealed religion.

That word fills all the future with the shrieks of the damned.

That word brutalises the New Testament, changes the Sermon on the Mount to hypocrisy and cant, and pollutes and hardens the very heart of Christ.

That word adds an infinite horror to death, and makes the cradle as terrible as the coffin.

That word is the assassin of joy, the mocking murderer of hope. That word extinguishes the light of life and wraps the world in gloom. That word drives Reason from his throne, and gives the crown to Madness.

That word drove pity from the hearts of men, stained countless swords with blood, lighted fagots, forged chains, built dungeons, erected scaffolds, and filled the world with poverty and pain.

That word is a coiled serpent in the mother's breast, that lifts its fanged head and hisses in her ear: "Your child will be the fuel of eternal fire."

That word blots from the firmament the star of hope and leaves the heavens black.

That word makes the Christian's God an eternal torturer, an everlasting inquisitor, an infinite wild beast.

This is the Christian prophecy of the eternal future:—

No hope in hell.

No pity in heaven.

No mercy in the heart of God.

#### VIII.—CONCLUSION.

The Old Testament is absurd, ignorant, and cruel; the New Testament is a mingling of the false and true—it is good and bad.

The Jehovah of the Jews is an impossible monster—the Trinity absurd and idiotic, Christ is a myth or a man.

The fall of man is contradicted by every fact concerning human history that we know. The scheme of redemption—through the atonement—is immoral and senseless. Hell was imagined by revenge, and the orthodox heaven is the selfish dream of heartless serfs and slaves. The foundations of the faith have crumbled and faded away. They were miracles, mistakes, and myths, ignorant and untrue, absurd, impossible, immoral, unnatural, cruel, childish, savage. Beneath the gaze of the scientist they vanish; confronted by facts they disappeared. The orthodox religion of our day has no foundation in truth. Beneath the superstructure can be found no fact.

Some may ask: "Are you trying to take our religion away?"

I answer, No. Superstition is not religion. Belief without evidence is not religion. Faith without facts is not religion.

To love justice; to long for the right; to love mercy; to pity the suffering; to assist the weak; to forget wrongs and remember benefits; to love the truth; to be sincere; to utter honest words; to love liberty; to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms; to love wife and child and friend; to make a happy home; to love the beautiful in art, in nature; to cultivate the mind; to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world; to cultivate courage and cheerfulness; to make others happy; to fill life with the splendour of generous acts, the warmth of loving words; to discard error; to destroy prejudice; to receive new truths with gladness; to cultivate hope; to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night; to do the best that can be done, and then to be resigned—this is the religion of reason, the creed

of science. This satisfies the brain and heart.

But, says the prejudiced priest, the malicious minister, "You take away a future life."

I am not trying to destroy another world, but I am endeavouring to prevent the theologians from destroying this.

If we are immortal, it is a fact in nature, and that fact does not depend on Bibles or Christs, on priests or creeds.

The hope of another life was in the heart long before the "sacred books" were written, and will remain there long after all the "sacred books" are known to be the work of savage and superstitious men. Hope is the consolation of the world.

The wanderers hope for home. Hope builds the house, and plants the flowers, and fills the air with song.

The sick and suffering hope for health. Hope gives them health, and paints the roses in their cheeks.

The lonely, the forsaken, hope for love. Hope brings the lover to their arms. They feel the kisses on their eager lips.

The poor in tenements and huts, in spite of rags and hunger, hope for wealth. Hope fills their thin and trembling hands with gold.

The dying hopes that death is but another birth, and love leans above the pallid face and whispers, "We shall meet again."

Hope is the consolation of the world.

Let us hope that, if there be a God, he is wise and good.

Let us hope that, if there be another life, it will bring peace and joy to all the children of men.

And let us hope that this poor earth on which we live may be a perfect world—a world without a crime, without a tear.



## THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

## I.

A PROFOUND change has taken place in the world of thought. The pews are trying to set themselves somewhat above the pulpit. The layman discusses theology with the minister, and smiles. Christians excuse themselves for belonging to the Church by denying a part of the creed. The idea is abroad that they who know the most of nature believe the least about theology. The sciences are regarded as infidels, and facts as scoffers. Thousands of most excellent people avoid churches, and, with few exceptions, only those attend prayer meetings who wish to be alone. The pulpit is losing because the people are growing.

Of course, it is still claimed that we are a Christian people, indebted to something called Christianity for all the progress we have made. There is still a vast difference of opinion as to what Christianity really is, although many warring sects have been discussing that question, with fire and sword, through centuries of creed and crime. Every new sect has been denounced at its birth as illegitimate, as a something born out of orthodox wedlock, and that should have been allowed to perish on the steps where it was found. Of the relative merits of the various denominations it is sufficient to say that each claims to be right. Among the evangelical churches there is a substantial agreement upon what they consider the fundamental truths of the gospel. These fundamental truths, as I understand them, are: That there is a personal God, the creator of the material universe; that he made man of the dust, and woman from part of the man; that the man and woman were tempted by the devil; that they were turned out of the Garden of Eden;

that about fifteen hundred years afterwards, God's patience having been exhausted by the wickedness of mankind, he drowned his children with the exception of eight persons; that afterwards he selected from their descendants Abraham, and through him the Jewish people; that he gave laws to these people, and tried to govern them in all things; that he made known his will in many ways; that he wrought a vast number of miracles; that he inspired men to write the Bible; that in the fulness of time, it having been found impossible to reform mankind, this God came upon earth as a child born of the Virgin Mary; that he lived in Palestine; that he preached for about three years, going from place to place, occasionally raising the dead, curing the blind and the halt; that he was crucified—for the crime of blasphemy, as the Jews supposed, but that, as a matter of fact, he was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of all who might have faith in him; that he was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he now is, making intercession for his followers; that he will forgive the sins of all who believe on him; and that those who do not believe will be consigned to the dungeons of eternal pain. These—it may be with the addition of the sacraments of Baptism and the Last Supper—constitute what is generally known as the Christian religion.

It is most cheerfully admitted that a vast number of people not only believe these things, but hold them in exceeding reverence, and imagine them to be of the utmost importance to mankind. They regard the Bible as the only light that God has given for the guidance of his children; that it is the one star in nature's sky—the foundation of all morality, of all law, of all order, and of all individual and national progress.

They regard it as the only means we have for ascertaining the will of God, the origin of man, and the destiny of the soul.

It is needless to inquire into the causes that have led so many people to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. In my opinion, they were, and are, mistaken; and the mistake has hindered, in countless ways, the civilisation of man. The Bible has been the fortress and defence of nearly every crime. No civilised country could re-enact its laws, and in many respects its moral code is abhorrent to every good and tender man. It is admitted that many of its precepts are pure, that many of its laws are wise and just, and that many of its statements are absolutely true.

Without desiring to hurt the feelings of anybody, I propose to give a few reasons for thinking that a few passages, at least, in the Old Testament are the product of a barbarous people.

In all civilised countries it is not only admitted, but it is passionately asserted, that slavery is, and always was, a hideous crime; that a war of conquest is simply murder; that polygamy is the enslavement of woman, the degradation of man, and the destruction of home; that nothing is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepit men, of helpless women, and of prattling babes; that captured maidens should not be given to soldiers; that wives should not be stoned to death on account of their religious opinions; and that the death penalty ought not to be inflicted for a violation of the Sabbath. We know that there was a time, in the history of almost every nation, when slavery, polygamy, and wars of extermination were regarded as divine institutions; when women were looked upon as beasts of burden, and when, among some people, it was considered the duty of the husband to murder the wife for differing from him on the subject of religion. Nations that entertain these views to-day are regarded as savage, and probably, with the exception of the South Sea Islanders, the

Feejees, some citizens of Delaware, and a few tribes in Central Africa, no human beings can be found degraded enough to agree upon these subjects with the Jehovah of the ancient Jews. The only evidence we have, or can have, that a nation has ceased to be savage is the fact that it has abandoned these doctrines. To everyone, except the theologian, it is perfectly easy to account for the mistakes, atrocities, and crimes of the past, by saying that civilisation is a slow and painful growth; that the moral perceptions are cultivated through ages of tyranny, of want, of crime, and of heroism; that it requires centuries for man to put out the eyes of self and hold in lofty and in equal poise the scales of justice; that conscience is born of suffering; that mercy is the child of the imagination—of the power to put oneself in the sufferer's place; and that man advances only as he becomes acquainted with his surroundings, with the mutual obligations of life, and learns to take advantage of the forces of nature.

But the believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to declare that there was a time when slavery was right—when men could buy, and women could sell, their babes. He is compelled to insist that there was a time when polygamy was the highest form of virtue; when wars of extermination were waged with the sword of mercy; when religious toleration was a crime; and when death was the just penalty for having expressed an honest thought. He must maintain that Jehovah is just as bad now as he was four thousand years ago, or that he was just as good then as he is now; but that human conditions have so changed that slavery, polygamy, religious persecution, and wars of conquest are now perfectly devilish. Once they were right—once they were commanded by God himself; now they are prohibited. There has been such a change in the conditions of man that at the present time the devil is in favour of slavery, polygamy, religious persecution, and wars of conquest. That is to say, the devil



entertains the same opinion to-day that Jehovah held four thousand years ago; but in the meantime Jehovah has remained exactly the same—changeless, and incapable of change.

We find that other nations besides the Jews had similar laws and ideas; that they believed in and practised slavery and polygamy, murdered women and children, and exterminated their neighbours to the extent of their power. It is not claimed that they received a revelation. It is admitted that they had no knowledge of the true God. And yet, by a strange coincidence, they practised the same crimes, of their own motion, that the Jews did by the command of Jehovah. From this it would seem that man can do wrong without a special revelation.

It will hardly be claimed, at this day, that the passages in the Bible upholding slavery, polygamy, war, and religious persecution are evidences of the inspiration of that book. Suppose that there had been nothing in the Old Testament upholding these crimes, would any modern Christian suspect that it was not inspired on account of the omission? Suppose that there had been nothing in the Old Testament but laws in favour of these crimes, would any intelligent Christian now contend that it was the work of the true God? If the devil had inspired a book, will some believer in the doctrine of inspiration tell us in what respect, on the subjects of slavery, polygamy, war, and liberty, it would have differed from some parts of the Old Testament? Suppose that we should now discover a Hindoo book of equal antiquity with the Old Testament, containing a defence of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution, would we regard it as evidence that the writers were inspired by an infinitely wise and merciful God? As most other nations at that time practised these crimes, and as the Jews would have practised them all, even if left to themselves, one can hardly see the necessity of any inspired

commands upon these subjects. Is there a believer in the Bible who does not wish that God, amid the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, had distinctly said to Moses that man should not own his fellow-man; that women should not sell their babes; that men should be allowed to think and investigate for themselves; and that the sword should never be unsheathed to shed the blood of honest men? Is there a believer, in the world, who would not be delighted to find that every one of these infamous passages is an interpolation, and that the skirts of God were never reddened by the blood of maiden, wife, or babe? Is there a believer who does not regret that God commanded a husband to stone his wife to death for suggesting the worship of the sun or moon? Surely, the light of experience is enough to tell us that slavery is wrong, that polygamy is infamous, and that murder is not a virtue. No one will now contend that it was worth God's while to impart the information to Moses, or to Joshua, or to anybody else, that the Jewish people might purchase slaves of the heathen, or that it was their duty to exterminate the natives of the Holy Land. The Deists have contended that the Old Testament is too cruel and barbarous to be the work of a wise and loving God. To this the theologians have replied that nature is just as cruel; that the earthquake, the volcano, the pestilence and storm, are just as savage as the Jewish God; and to my mind this is a perfect answer.

Suppose that we knew that, after "inspired" men had finished the Bible, the devil got possession of it, and wrote a few passages; what part of the sacred Scriptures would Christians now pick out as being probably his work? Which of the following passages would naturally be selected as having been written by the devil: "Love thy neighbour as thyself"; or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every woman, but all the women children keep alive for yourselves"?



It may be that the best way to illustrate what I have said of the Old Testament is to compare some of the supposed teachings of Jehovah with those of persons who never read an "inspired" line, and who lived and died without having received the light of revelation. Nothing can be more suggestive than a comparison of the ideas of Jehovah—the inspired words of the one claimed to be the infinite God, as recorded in the Bible—with those that have been expressed by men who, all admit, received no help from heaven.

In all ages of which any record has been preserved there have been those who gave their ideas of justice, charity, liberty, love, and law. Now, if the Bible is really the work of God, it should contain the grandest and sublimest truths. It should, in all respects, excel the works of man. Within that book should be found the best and loftiest definitions of justice; the truest conceptions of human liberty; the clearest outlines of duty; the tenderest, the highest, and the noblest thoughts—not that the human mind has produced, but that the human mind is capable of receiving. Upon every page should be found the luminous evidence of its divine origin. Unless it contains grander and more wonderful things than man has written, we are not only justified in saying, but we are compelled to say, that it was written by no being superior to man. It may be said that it is unfair to call attention to certain bad things in the Bible, while the good are not so much as mentioned. To this it may be replied that a divine being would not put bad things in a book. Certainly a being of infinite intelligence, power, and goodness could never fall below the ideal of "depraved and barbarous" man. It will not do, after we find that the Bible upholds what we now call crimes, to say that it is not verbally inspired. If the words are not inspired, what is? It may be said that the thoughts are inspired. But this would include only the thoughts expressed without words.

If ideas are inspired, they must be contained in and expressed only by inspired words—that is to say, the arrangement of the words, with relation to each other, must have been inspired. For the purpose of this perfect arrangement the writers, according to the Christian world, were inspired. Were some sculptor inspired of God to make a statue perfect in its every part, we would not say that the marble was inspired, but the statue—the relation of part to part, the married harmony of form and function. The language, the words, take the place of the marble, and it is the arrangement of these words that Christians claim to be inspired. If there is one uninspired word—that is, one word in the wrong place, or a word that ought not to be there—to that extent the Bible is an uninspired book. The moment it is admitted that some words are not, in their arrangement as to other words, inspired, then, unless with absolute certainty these words can be pointed out, a doubt is cast on all the words the book contains. If it was worth God's while to make a revelation to man at all, it was certainly worth his while to see that it was correctly made. He would not have allowed the ideas and mistakes of pretended prophets and designing priests to become so mingled with the original text that it is impossible to tell where he ceased and where the priests and prophets began. Neither will it do to say that God adapted his revelation to the prejudices of mankind. Of course, it was necessary for an infinite being to adapt his revelation to the intellectual capacity of man; but why should God confirm a barbarian in his prejudices? Why should he fortify a heathen in his crimes? If a revelation is of any importance whatever, it is to eradicate prejudices from the human mind. It should be a lever with which to raise the human race. Theologians have exhausted their ingenuity in finding excuses for God. It seems to me that they would be better employed in finding excuses for men. They tell us

that the Jews were so cruel and ignorant that God was compelled to justify, or nearly to justify, many of their crimes, in order to have any influence with them whatever. They tell us that, if he had declared slavery and polygamy to be criminal, the Jews would have refused to receive the Ten Commandments. They insist that, under the circumstances, God did the best he could; that his real intention was to lead them along slowly, step by step, so that in a few hundred years they would be induced to admit that it was hardly fair to steal a babe from its mother's breast. It has always seemed reasonable that an infinite God ought to have been able to make man grand enough to know, even without a special revelation, that it is not altogether right to steal the labour, or the wife, or the child, of another. When the whole question is thoroughly examined, the world will find that Jehovah had the prejudices, the hatreds, and superstitions of his day.

If there is anything of value, it is liberty. Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of life. Without it the world is a prison, and the universe is an infinite dungeon.

If the Bible is really inspired, Jehovah commanded the Jewish people to buy the children of the strangers that sojourned among them, and ordered that the children thus bought should be an inheritance for the children of the Jews, and that they should be bondmen and bondwomen for ever. Yet Epictetus, a man to whom no revelation was made, a man whose soul followed only the light of nature, and who had never heard of the Jewish God, was great enough to say: "Will you not remember that your servants are by nature your brothers, the children of God? In saying that you have bought them, you look down on the earth, and into the pit, on the wretched law of men long since dead; but you see not the laws of the gods."

We find that Jehovah, speaking to his chosen people, assured them that their bondmen and their bondmaids must be

"of the heathen that were round about them." "Of them," said Jehovah, "shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." And yet Cicero, a pagan—Cicero, who had never been enlightened by reading the Old Testament, had the moral grandeur to declare: "They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens, but not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, with which benevolence and justice would perish for ever."

If the Bible is inspired, Jehovah, God of all worlds, actually said: "And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." And yet Zeno, founder of the Stoics, centuries before Christ was born, insisted that no man could be the owner of another, and that the title was bad, whether the slave had become so by conquest or by purchase. Jehovah ordered a Jewish general to make war, and gave, among others, this command: "When the Lord thy God shall drive them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them; nor show mercy unto them." And yet Epictetus, whom we have already quoted, gave this marvellous rule for the guidance of human conduct: "Live with thy inferiors as thou wouldst have thy superiors live with thee."

Is it possible, after all, that a being of infinite goodness and wisdom said: "I will heap mischief upon them; I will send mine arrows upon them; they shall be burned with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. I will send the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without, the terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling, also, with the man of gray hairs"; while Seneca, an uninspired Roman, said: "The wise man will not pardon any crime that ought to be punished, but he will accomplish, in a nobler way, all that is sought in pardoning. He will spare



some and watch over some because of their youth, and others on account of their ignorance. His clemency will not fall short of justice, but will fulfil it perfectly."

Can we believe that God ever said of anyone: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow; let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labour; let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children"? If he ever said these words, surely he had never heard this line, this strain of music, from the Hindoo: "Sweet is the lute to those who have not heard the prattle of their own children."

Jehovah, "from the clouds and darkness of Sinai," said to the Jews: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me..... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Contrast this with the words put by the Hindoo into the mouth of Brahma: "I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship, and I am the reward of all worshippers."

Compare these passages. The first, a dungeon where crawl the things begot of jealous slime; the other, great as the domed firmament inlaid with suns.

## II.

Waiving the contradictory statements in the various books of the New Testament; leaving out of the question the history of the manuscripts; saying nothing about the errors in translation and the interpolations made by the fathers; and admitting, for the time being, that the books were all written at the times claimed, and by the persons whose names they bear, the questions of

inspiration, probability, and absurdity still remain.

As a rule, where several persons testify to the same transaction, while agreeing in the main points, they will disagree upon many minor things, and such disagreement upon minor matters is generally considered as evidence that the witnesses have not agreed among themselves upon the story they should tell. These differences in statement we account for from the facts that all did not see alike, that all did not have the same opportunity for seeing, and that all had not equally good memories. But when we claim that the witnesses were inspired, we must admit that he who inspired them did know exactly what occurred, and, consequently, there should be no contradiction, even in the minutest detail. The accounts should be not only substantially, but they should be actually, the same. It is impossible to account for any differences, or any contradictions, except from the weaknesses of human nature; and these weaknesses cannot be predicated of divine wisdom. Why should there be more than one correct account of anything? Why were four gospels necessary? One inspired record of all that happened ought to be enough.

One great objection to the Old Testament is the cruelty said to have been commanded by God; but all the cruelties recounted in the Old Testament ceased with death. The vengeance of Jehovah stopped at the portal of the tomb. He never threatened to avenge himself upon the dead; and not one word, from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse of Malachi, contains the slightest intimation that God will punish in another world. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the frightful doctrine of eternal pain. It was the teacher of universal benevolence who rent the veil between time and eternity, and fixed the horrified gaze of man on the lurid gulfs of hell. Within the breast of non-resistance was coiled the worm that never dies



One great objection to the New Testament is that it bases salvation upon belief. This, at least, is true of the Gospel according to John, and of many of the Epistles. I admit that Matthew never heard of the atonement, and died utterly ignorant of the scheme of salvation. I also admit that Mark never dreamed that it was necessary for a man to be born again; that he knew nothing of the mysterious doctrine of regeneration; and that he never even suspected that it was necessary to believe anything. In the sixteenth chapter of Mark we are told that "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned"; but this passage has been shown to be an interpolation, and, consequently, not a solitary word is found in the Gospel according to Mark upon the subject of salvation by faith. The same is also true of the Gospel of Luke. It says not one word as to the necessity of believing on Jesus Christ, not one word as to the atonement, not one word upon the scheme of salvation, and not the slightest hint that it is necessary to believe anything here in order to be happy hereafter.

And I here take occasion to say that with most of the teachings of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke I most heartily agree. The miraculous parts must, of course, be thrown aside. I admit that the necessity of belief, the atonement, and the scheme of salvation are all set forth in the Gospel of John—a gospel, in my opinion, not written until long after the others.

According to the prevailing Christian belief, the Christian religion rests upon the doctrine of the atonement. If this doctrine is without foundation, if it is repugnant to justice and mercy, the fabric falls. We are told that the first man committed a crime for which all his posterity are responsible—in other words, that we are accountable, and can be justly punished, for a sin we never, in fact, committed. This absurdity was the father of another—namely, that a

man can be rewarded for a good action done by another. God, according to the modern theologians, made a law, with the penalty of eternal death for its infraction. All men, they say, have broken that law. In the economy of heaven this law had to be vindicated. This could be done by damning the whole human race. Through what is known as the atonement the salvation of a few was made possible. They insist that the law—whatever that is—demanded the extreme penalty, that justice called for its victims, and that even mercy ceased to plead. Under these circumstances God, by allowing the innocent to suffer, satisfactorily settled with the law, and allowed a few of the guilty to escape. The law was satisfied with this arrangement. To carry out this scheme God was born as a babe into this world. "He grew in stature and increased in knowledge." At the age of thirty-three, after having lived a life filled with kindness, charity, and nobility, after having practised every virtue, he was sacrificed as an atonement for man. It is claimed that he actually took our place, and bore our sins and our guilt; that in this way the justice of God was satisfied; and that the blood of Christ was an atonement, an expiation, for the sins of all who might believe on him.

Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sin except through the shedding of blood. If a man committed certain sins, he must bring to the priest a lamb, a bullock, a goat, or a pair of turtle-doves. The priest would lay his hands upon the animal, and the sin of the man would be transferred. Then the animal would be killed in the place of the real sinner, and the blood thus shed and sprinkled upon the altar would be an atonement. In this way Jehovah was satisfied. The greater the crime, the greater the sacrifice; the more blood, the greater the atonement. There was always a certain ratio between the value of the animal and the enormity of the sin. The most minute directions were given about the killing of these animals,

and about the sprinkling of their blood. Every priest became a butcher, and every sanctuary a slaughter-house. Nothing could be more utterly shocking to a refined and loving soul. Nothing could have been better calculated to harden the heart than this continual shedding of innocent blood. This terrible system is supposed to have culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is necessary to shed no more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited. The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery. How can sin be transferred from men to animals, and how can the shedding of the blood of animals atone for the sins of men?

The Church says that the sinner is in debt to God, and that the obligation is discharged by the Saviour. The best that can possibly be said of such a transaction is that the debt is transferred, not paid. The truth is that a sinner is in debt to the person he has injured. If a man injures his neighbour, it is not enough for him to get the forgiveness of God, but he must have the forgiveness of his neighbour. If a man puts his hand in the fire and God forgives him, his hand will smart exactly the same. You must, after all, reap what you sow. No god can give you wheat when you sow tares, and no devil can give you tares when you sow wheat.

There are in nature neither rewards nor punishments—there are consequences. The life of Christ is worth its example, its moral force, its heroism of benevolence.

To make innocence suffer is the greatest sin; how, then, is it possible to make the suffering of the innocent a justification for the criminal? Why should a man be willing to let the innocent suffer for him? Does not the willingness show that he is utterly unworthy of the sacrifice? Certainly, no man would be fit for heaven who would consent that an innocent person should suffer for his sin. What should

we think of a man who would allow another to die for a crime that he himself had committed? What would we think of a law that allowed the innocent to take the place of the guilty? Is it possible to vindicate a just law by inflicting punishment on the innocent? Would not that be a second violation instead of a vindication?

If there was no general atonement until the crucifixion of Christ, what became of the countless millions who died before that time? And it must be remembered that the blood shed by the Jews was not for other nations. Jehovah hated foreigners. The Gentiles were left without forgiveness. What has become of the millions who have died since, without having heard of the atonement? What becomes of those who have heard, but have not believed? It seems to me that the doctrine of the atonement is absurd, unjust, and immoral. Can a law be satisfied by the execution of the wrong person? When a man commits a crime, the law demands his punishment, not that of a substitute; and there can be no law, human or divine, that can be satisfied by the punishment of a substitute. Can there be a law that demands that the guilty be rewarded? And yet to reward the guilty is far nearer justice than to punish the innocent.

According to the orthodox theology, there would have been no heaven had no atonement been made. All the children of men would have been cast into hell for ever. The old men bowed with grief; the smiling mothers, the sweet babes, the loving maidens, the brave, the tender, and the just would have been given over to eternal pain. Man, it is claimed, can make no atonement for himself. If he commits one sin, and with that exception lives a life of perfect virtue, still that one sin would remain unexpiated, unatoned, and for that one sin he would be for ever lost. To be saved by the goodness of another, to be a redeemed debtor for ever, has in it something repugnant to manhood.

We must also remember that Jehovah



took special charge of the Jewish people ; and we have always been taught that he did so for the purpose of civilising them. If he had succeeded in civilising the Jews, he would have made the damnation of the entire human race a certainty ; because, if the Jews had been a civilised people when Christ appeared—a people whose hearts had not been hardened by the laws and teachings of Jehovah—they would not have crucified him, and, as a consequence, the world would have been lost. If the Jews had believed in religious freedom—in the right of thought and speech—not a human soul could ever have been saved. If, when Christ was on his way to Calvary, some brave, heroic soul had rescued him from the holy mob, he would not only have been eternally damned for his pains, but would have rendered impossible the salvation of any human being, and, except for the crucifixion of her son, the Virgin Mary, if the Church is right, would be to-day among the lost.

In countless ways the Christian world has endeavoured, for nearly two thousand years, to explain the atonement, and every effort has ended in an admission that it cannot be understood, and a declaration that it must be believed. Is it not immoral to teach that man can sin ; that he can harden his heart and pollute his soul ; and that, by repenting and believing something that he does not comprehend, he can avoid the consequences of his crimes ? Has the promise and hope of forgiveness ever prevented the commission of a sin ? Should men be taught that sin gives happiness here ; that they ought to bear the evils of a virtuous life in this world for the sake of joy in the next ; that they can repent between the last sin and the last breath ; that after repentance every stain of the soul is washed away by the innocent blood of another ; that the serpent of regret will not hiss in the ear of memory ; that the saved will not even pity the victims of their own crimes ; that the goodness of another can be transferred to them ; and that sins

forgiven cease to affect the unhappy wretches sinned against ?

Another objection is that a certain belief is necessary to save the soul. It is often asserted that to believe is the only safe way. If you wish to be safe, be honest. Nothing can be safer than that. No matter what his belief may be, no man, even in the hour of death, can regret having been honest. It never can be necessary to throw away your reason to save your soul. A soul without reason is scarcely worth saving. There is no more degrading doctrine than that of mental non-resistance. The soul has a right to defend its castle—the brain ; and he who waives that right becomes a serf and slave. Neither can I admit that a man, by doing me an injury, can place me under obligation to do him a service. To render benefits for injuries is to ignore all distinctions between actions. He who treats his friends and enemies alike has neither love nor justice. The idea of non-resistance never occurred to a man with power to protect himself. This doctrine was the child of weakness, born when resistance was impossible. To allow a crime to be committed when you can prevent it is next to committing the crime yourself. And yet, under the banner of non-resistance, the Church has shed the blood of millions, and in the folds of her sacred vestments have gleamed the daggers of assassination. With her cunning hands she wove the purple for hypocrisy, and placed the crown upon the brow of crime. For a thousand years larceny held the scales of justice, while beggars scorned the princely sons of toil, and ignorant fear denounced the liberty of thought.

If Christ was, in fact, God, he knew all the future. Before him, like a panorama, moved the history yet to be. He knew exactly how his words would be interpreted. He knew what crimes, what horrors, what infamies, would be committed in his name. He knew that the fires of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs.



He knew that brave men would languish in dungeons, in darkness, filled with pain; that the Church would use instruments of torture; that his followers would appeal to whip and chain. He must have seen the horizon of the future red with the flames of the *auto da fé*. He knew all the creeds that would spring like poisonous fungi from every text. He saw the sects waging war against each other. He saw thousands of men, under the orders of priests, building dungeons for their fellow-men. He saw them using instruments of pain. He heard the groans, saw the faces white with agony, the tears, the blood—heard the shrieks and sobs of all the moaning, martyred multitudes. He knew that commentaries would be written on his words with swords, to be read by the light of faggots. He knew that the Inquisition would be born of teachings attributed to him. He saw all the interpolations and falsehoods that hypocrisy would write and tell. He knew that above these fields of death, these dungeons, these burnings, for a thousand years would float the dripping banner of the cross. He knew that in his name his followers would trade in human flesh, that cradles would be robbed, and women's breasts unbabed for gold, and yet he died with voiceless lips. Why did he fail to speak? Why did he not tell his disciples, and through them the world, that man should not persecute, for opinion's sake, his fellow-men? Why did he not cry: "You shall not persecute in my name; you shall not burn and torment those who differ from you in creed"? Why did he not plainly say: "I am the Son of God"? Why did he not explain the doctrine of the Trinity? Why did he not tell the manner of baptism that was pleasing to him? Why did he not say something positive, definite, and satisfactory about another world? Why did he not turn the tear-stained hope of heaven to the glad knowledge of another life? Why did he go dumbly to his death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt?

He came, they tell us, to make a revelation, and what did he reveal? "Love thy neighbour as thyself"? That was in the Old Testament. "Love God with all thy heart"? That was in the Old Testament. "Return good for evil"? That was said by Buddha seven hundred years before Christ was born. "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"? This was the doctrine of Laotse. Did he come to give a rule of action? Zoroaster had done this long before: "Whenever thou art in doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, abstain from it." Did he come to teach us of another world? The immortality of the soul had been taught by Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans hundreds of years before he was born. Long before, the world had been told by Socrates that "One who is injured ought not to return the injury, for on no account can it be right to do an injustice; and it is not right to return an injury, or to do evil to any man, however much we may have suffered from him." And Cicero had said: "Let us not listen to those who think that we ought to be angry with our enemies, and who believe this to be great and manly; nothing is more praiseworthy, nothing so clearly shows a great and noble soul, as clemency and readiness to forgive."

Is there anything nearer perfect than this from Confucius: "For benefits return benefits; for injuries return justice without any admixture of revenge"?

The dogma of eternal punishment rests upon passages in the New Testament. This infamous belief subverts every idea of justice. Around the angel of immortality the Church has coiled this serpent. A finite being can commit neither an infinite sin, nor a sin against the infinite. A being of infinite goodness and wisdom has no right, according to the human standard of justice, to create any being destined to suffer eternal pain. A being of infinite wisdom would not create a failure, and surely a man destined to everlasting agony is not a success.

How long, according to the universal benevolence of the New Testament, can a man be reasonably punished in the next world for failing to believe something unreasonable in this? Can it be possible that any punishment can endure for ever? Suppose that every flake of snow that ever fell was a figure nine, and that the first flake was multiplied by the second, and that product by the third, and so on to the last flake. And then suppose that this total should be multiplied by every drop of rain that ever fell, calling each drop a figure nine; and that total by each blade of grass that ever helped to weave a carpet for the earth, calling each blade a figure nine; and that again by every grain of sand on every shore, so that the grand total would make a line of nines so long that it would require millions upon millions of years for light, travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles per second, to reach the end. And suppose, further, that each unit in this almost infinite total stood for billions of ages—still that vast and almost endless time, measured by all the years beyond, is as one flake, one drop, one leaf, one grain, compared with all the flakes, and drops, and leaves, and blades, and grains.

Upon love's breast the Church has placed the eternal asp.

And yet, in the same book in which is taught this most infamous of doctrines, we are assured that "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

### III.

So far as we know, man is the author of all books. If a book had been found on the earth by the first man, he might have regarded it as the work of God; but as men were here a good while before any books were found, and as man has produced a great many books, the probability is that the Bible is no exception.

Most nations, at the time the Old Testament was written, believed in

slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution; and it is not wonderful that the book contained nothing contrary to such belief. The fact that it was in exact accord with the morality of its time proves that it was not the product of any being superior to man. "The inspired writers" upheld or established slavery, countenanced polygamy, commanded wars of extermination, and ordered the slaughter of women and babes. In these respects they were precisely like the uninspired savages by whom they were surrounded. They also taught and commanded religious persecution as a duty, and visited the most trivial offences with the punishment of death. In these particulars they were in exact accord with their barbarian neighbours. They were utterly ignorant of geology and astronomy, and knew no more of what had happened than of what would happen; and, so far as accuracy is concerned, their history and prophecy were about equal; in other words, they were just as ignorant as those who lived and died in nature's night.

Does any Christian believe that, if God were to write a book now, he would uphold the crimes commanded in the Old Testament? Has Jehovah improved? Has infinite mercy become more merciful? Has infinite wisdom intellectually advanced? Will anyone claim that the passages upholding slavery have liberated mankind; that we are indebted for our modern homes to the texts that made polygamy a virtue; or that religious liberty found its soil, its light, and rain in the infamous verse wherein the husband is commanded to stone to death the wife for worshipping an unknown god?

The usual answer to these objections is that no country has ever been civilised without the Bible.

The Jews were the only people to whom Jehovah made his will directly known—the only people who had the Old Testament. Other nations were utterly neglected by their Creator. Yet



such was the effect of the Old Testament on the Jews that they crucified a kind, loving, and perfectly innocent man. They could not have done much worse without a Bible. In the crucifixion of Christ they followed the teachings of his Father. If, as it is now alleged by the theologians, no nation can be civilised without a Bible, certainly God must have known the fact six thousand years ago, as well as the theologians know it now. Why did he not furnish every nation with a Bible?

As to the Old Testament, I insist that all the bad passages were written by men; that those passages were not inspired. I insist that a being of infinite goodness never commanded man to enslave his fellow-man, never told a mother to sell her babe, never established polygamy, never ordered one nation to exterminate another, and never told a husband to kill his wife because she suggested the worshipping of some other god.

I also insist that the Old Testament would be a much better book with all of these passages left out; and, whatever may be said of the rest, the passages to which attention has been drawn can with vastly more propriety be attributed to a devil than to a god.

Take from the New Testament all passages upholding the idea that belief is necessary to salvation; that Christ was offered as an atonement for the sins of the world; that the punishment of the human soul will go on for ever; that heaven is the reward of faith, and hell the penalty of honest investigation—take from it all miraculous stories, and I admit that all the good passages are true. If they are true, it makes no difference whether they are inspired or not. Inspiration is only necessary to give authority to that which is repugnant to human reason. Only that which never happened needs to be substantiated by miracles. The universe is natural.

The Church must cease to insist that the passages upholding the institutions of savage men were inspired of God.

The dogma of the atonement must be abandoned. Good deeds must take the place of faith. The savagery of eternal punishment must be renounced. Credulity is not a virtue, and investigation is not a crime. Miracles are the children of mendacity. Nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, unbroken, sublime, and eternal procession of causes and effects.

Reason must be the final arbiter. "Inspired" books attested by miracles cannot stand against a demonstrated fact. A religion that does not command the respect of the greatest minds will, in a little while, excite the mockery of all. Every civilised man believes in the liberty of thought. Is it possible that God is intolerant? Is an act infamous in man one of the virtues of the Deity? Could there be progress in heaven without intellectual liberty? Is the freedom of the future to exist only in perdition? Is it not, after all, barely possible that a man acting like Christ can be saved? Is a man to be eternally rewarded for believing according to evidence, without evidence, or against evidence? Are we to be saved because we are good, or because another was virtuous? Is credulity to be winged and crowned, while honest doubt is chained and damned?

Do not misunderstand me. My position is that the cruel passages in the Old Testament are not inspired; that slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution always have been, are, and for ever will be, abhorred and cursed by the honest, the virtuous, and the loving; that the innocent cannot justly suffer for the guilty, and that vicarious vice and vicarious virtue are equally absurd; that eternal punishment is eternal revenge; that only the natural can happen; that miracles prove the dishonesty of the few and the credulity of the many; and that, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, salvation does not depend upon belief, nor the atonement, nor a "second birth," but that these gospels are in exact harmony



with the declaration of the great Persian :  
"Taking the first footstep with the good  
thought, the second with the good word,  
and the third with the good deed, I  
entered paradise."

The dogmas of the past no longer  
reach the level of the highest thought,  
nor satisfy the hunger of the heart.  
While dusty faiths, embalmed and

sepulchred in ancient texts, remain the  
same, the sympathies of men enlarge ;  
the brain no longer kills its young ; the  
happy lips give liberty to honest thoughts ;  
the mental firmament expands and lifts ;  
the broken clouds drift by ; the hideous  
dreams, the foul, misshapen children of  
the monstrous night, dissolve and fade.

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## VOLTAIRE

## I.

THE infidels of one age have often been the aureoled saints of the next.

The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new.

As time sweeps on the old passes away, and the new in its turn becomes old.

There are in the intellectual world, as in the physical, decay and growth, and ever by the grave of buried age stand youth and joy.

The history of intellectual progress is written in the lives of infidels.

Political rights have been preserved by traitors; the liberty of mind by heretics.

To attack the king was treason; to dispute the priest was blasphemy.

For many centuries the sword and cross were allies. Together they attacked the rights of man. They defended each other.

The throne and altar were twins—two cultures from the same egg.

James I. said: "No bishop, no king." He might have added: No cross, no crown. The king owned the bodies of men; the priest the souls. One lived on taxes collected by force, the other on alms collected by fear—both robbers, both beggars.

These robbers and these beggars controlled two worlds. The king made laws, the priest made creeds. Both obtained their authority from God; both were the agents of the infinite.

With bowed backs the people carried the burdens of one, and with wonder's open mouth received the dogmas of the other.

If the people aspired to be free, they were crushed by the king, and every priest was a Herod, who slaughtered the children of the brain.

The king ruled by force, the priest by fear, and both by both.

The king said to the people: "God made you peasants, and he made me king; he made you to labour, and me to enjoy; he made rags and hovels for you, robes and palaces for me. He made you to obey, and me to command. Such is the justice of God."

And the priest said: "God made you ignorant and vile, he made me holy and wise; you are the sheep, I am the shepherd; your fleeces belong to me. If you do not obey me here, God will punish you now, and torment you forever in another world. Such is the mercy of God."

"You must not reason. Reason is a rebel. You must not contradict—contradiction is born of egotism; you must believe. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Heaven was a question of ears.

Fortunately for us, there have been traitors, and there have been heretics, blasphemers, thinkers, investigators, lovers of liberty, men of genius, who have given their lives to better the condition of their fellow-men.

It may be well enough here to ask the question: "What is greatness?"

A great man adds to the sum of knowledge, extends the horizon of thought, releases souls from the Bastille of fear, crosses unknown and mysterious seas, gives new islands and new continents to the domain of thought, new constellations to the firmament of mind. A great man does not seek applause or place; he seeks for truth; he seeks the road to happiness; and what he ascertains he gives to others.

A great man throws pearls before swine, and the swine are sometimes changed to men. If the great had always kept their pearls, vast multitudes would be barbarians now.

A great man is a torch in the darkness, a beacon in superstition's night, an inspiration and a prophecy.

Greatness is not the gift of majorities ; it cannot be thrust upon any man ; men cannot give it to another ; they can give place and power, but not greatness.

The place does not make the man, nor the sceptre the king. Greatness is from within.

The great men are the heroes who have freed the bodies of men ; they are the philosophers and thinkers who have given liberty to the soul ; they are the poets who have transfigured the common and filled the lives of many millions with love and song.

They are the artists who have covered the bare walls of weary life with the triumphs of genius.

They are the heroes who have slain the monsters of ignorance and fear, who have outraged the Gorgon and driven the cruel gods from their thrones.

They are the inventors, the discoverers, the great mechanics, the kings of the useful who have civilised this world.

At the head of this heroic army, foremost of all, stands Voltaire, whose memory we are honouring to-night.

Voltaire ! a name that excites the admiration of men, the malignity of priests. Pronounce that name in the presence of a clergyman, and you will find that you have made a declaration of war. Pronounce that name, and from the face of the priest the mask of meekness will fall, and from the mouth of forgiveness will pour a Niagara of vituperation and calumny. And yet Voltaire was the greatest man of his century, and did more to free the human race than any other of the sons of men.

On Sunday, November 21st, 1694, a babe was born—a babe so exceedingly frail that the breath hesitated about remaining, and the parents had him baptised as soon as possible. They were anxious to save the soul of this babe, and they knew that if death came before baptism the child would be doomed to an eternity of pain. They knew that God despised an unsprinkled

child. The priest, who, with a few drops of water, gave the name of François Marie Arouet to this babe and saved his soul, little thought that before him, wrapped in many folds, weakly wailing, scarcely breathing, was the one destined to tear from the white throat of Liberty the cruel, murderous claws of the "Triumphant Beast."

When Voltaire came to this "great stage of fools," his country had been Christianised—not civilised—for about fourteen hundred years. For a thousand years the religion of peace and goodwill had been supreme. The laws had been given by Christian kings, and sanctioned by "wise and holy men."

Under the benign reign of universal love every court had its chamber of torture, and every priest relied on the thumbscrew and rack.

Such had been the success of the blessed Gospel that every science was an outcast.

To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow-men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth—these were all crimes, and the "holy Mother Church" pursued the criminals with sword and flame.

The believers in a God of love—an infinite Father—punished hundreds of offences with torture and death. Suspected persons were tortured to make them confess. Convicted persons were tortured to make them give the names of their accomplices. Under the leadership of the Church cruelty had become the only reforming power.

In this blessed year 1694 all authors were at the mercy of king and priest. The most of them were cast into prisons, impoverished by fines and costs, exiled or executed.

The little time that hangmen could snatch from professional duties was occupied in burning books.

The courts of justice were traps in which the innocent were caught. The judges were almost as malicious and cruel as though they had been bishops or saints. There was no trial by jury, and



the rules of evidence allowed the conviction of the supposed criminal by the proof of suspicion or hearsay.

The witnesses, being liable to be tortured, generally told what the judges wished to hear.

The supernatural and the miraculous controlled the world. Everything was explained, but nothing was understood. The Church was at the head. The sick bought from monks little amulets of consecrated paper. They did not send for a doctor, but for a priest, and the priest sold the diseased and the dying these magical amulets. These little pieces of paper, with the help of some saint, would cure diseases of every kind. If you would put one in a cradle, it would keep the child from being bewitched. If you would put one in the barn, the rats would not eat your corn. If you would keep one in the house, evil spirits would not enter your doors; and if you buried them in the fields, you would have good weather, the frost would be delayed, rain would come when needed, and abundant crops would bless your labour. The Church insisted that all diseases could be cured in the name of God, and that these cures could be effected by prayers or exorcism, by touching bones of saints or pieces of the true Cross, by being sprinkled with holy water or with sanctified salt, or touched with magical oil.

In that day the dead saints were the best physicians—St. Valentine cured the epilepsy; St. Gervasius was exceedingly good for rheumatism; St. Michael for cancer; St. Judas for coughs and colds; St. Ovidius restored the hearing; St. Sebastian was good for the bites of snakes and the stings of poisonous insects; St. Apollonia for toothache; St. Clara for any trouble with the eyes; and St. Hubert for hydrophobia. It was known that doctors reduced the revenues of the Church; that was enough—science was the enemy of religion.

The Church thought that the air was filled with devils; that every sinner was a kind of a tenement house inhabited by

evil spirits; that angels were on one side of men, and evil spirits on the other; and that God would, when the subscriptions and donations justified the effort, drive the evil spirits from the field.

Satan had power over the air; consequently, he controlled the frost, the mildew, the lightning, and the flood; and the principal business of the Church was with bells and holy water and incense and crosses to defeat the machinations of that prince of the power of the air.

Great reliance was placed upon the bells; they were sprinkled with holy water, and their clangour cleared the air of imps and fiends. And bells also protected the people from storms and lightning. In that day the Church used to anathematise insects. Suits were commenced against rats, and judgment rendered. Every monastery had its master magician, who sold incense and salt and tapers and consecrated palms and relics. Every science was regarded as an enemy; every fact held the creed of the Church in scorn. Investigators were regarded as dangerous; thinkers were traitors; and the Church exerted its vast power to prevent the intellectual progress of man.

There was no real liberty, no real education, no real philosophy, no real science—nothing but credulity and superstition. The world was under the control of Satan and the Church.

The Church firmly believed in the existence of witches and devils and fiends. In this way the Church had every enemy within her power. It simply had to charge him with being a wizard, of holding communication with devils, and the ignorant mob were ready to tear him to pieces. So prevalent was this belief—this belief in the supernatural—that the poor people were finally driven to make the best possible terms they could with the spirit of evil. This frightful doctrine filled every friend with suspicion of his friend; it made the husband denounce the wife, children their parents, parents their children. It

destroyed the amenities of humanity ; it did away with justice in courts ; it broke the bond of friendship ; it filled with poison the golden cup of life ; it turned earth into a very perdition peopled with abominable, malicious, and hideous fiends. Such was the result of a belief in the supernatural ; such was the result of giving up the evidence of their own senses and relying upon dreams, visions, and fears ; such was the result of the attack upon the human reason ; such the result of depending on the imagination, on the supernatural ; such the result of living in this world for another, of depending upon priests instead of upon ourselves. The Protestants vied with Catholics ; Luther stood side by side with the priests he had deserted in promoting this belief in devils and fiends. To the Catholic every Protestant was possessed by a devil ; to the Protestant every Catholic was the home of a fiend. All order, all regular succession of causes and effects, were known no more ; the natural ceased to exist ; the learned and the ignorant were on a level. The priest was caught in the net he had spread for the peasant, and Christendom became a vast madhouse, with the insane for keepers.

When Voltaire was born the Church ruled and owned France. It was a period of almost universal corruption. The priests were mostly libertines, the judges cruel and venal. The royal palace was a house of prostitution. The nobles were heartless, proud, arrogant, and cruel to the last degree. The common people were treated as beasts. It took the Church a thousand years to bring about this happy condition of things.

The seeds of the Revolution unconsciously were being scattered by every noble and by every priest. They were germinating slowly in the hearts of the wretched ; they were being watered by the tears of agony ; blows began to bear interest. There was a faint longing for blood. Workmen, blackened by the sun, bowed by labour, deformed by

want, looked at the white throats of scornful ladies and thought about cutting them.

In those days witnesses were cross-examined with instruments of torture ; the Church was the arsenal of superstition ; miracles, relics, angels, and devils were as common as lies.

In order to appreciate a great man we must know his surroundings. We must understand the scope of the drama in which he played—the part he acted ; and we must also know his audience.

In England George I. was disporting with the "Maypole" and "Elephant," and then George II., jealous and choleric, hating the English and their language, making, however, an excellent image or idol before whom the English were glad to bow—snobbery triumphant—the criminal code getting bloodier every day—223 offences punishable with death—the prisons filled and the scaffolds crowded—efforts on every hand to repress the ambition of men to be men—the Church relying on superstition and ceremony to make men good—and the State dependent on the whip, the rope, and axe to make men patriotic.

In Spain the Inquisition in full control ; all the instruments of torture used to prevent the development of the mind. Spain, that had driven out the Jews—that is to say, her talent ; that had driven out the Moors—that is to say, her taste and her industry—was still endeavouring by all religious means to reduce the land to the imbecility of the true faith.

In Portugal they were burning women and children for having eaten meat on a holy day, and this to please the most merciful God.

In Italy the nation prostrate, covered with swarms of cardinals and bishops and priests and monks and nuns, and every representative of holy sloth. The Inquisition there also ; while hands that were clasped in prayer or stretched for alms grasped with eagerness and joy the lever of the rack, or gathered faggots for the holy flame.

In Germany they were burning men



and women charged with having made a compact with the enemy of man.

And in our own fair land persecuting Quakers, stealing men and women from another shore, stealing children from their mothers' breasts, and paying labour with the cruel lash.

Superstition ruled the world!

There is but one use for law, but one excuse for government—the preservation of liberty, to give to each man his own, to secure to the farmer what he produces from the soil, the mechanic what he invents and makes, to the artist what he creates, to the thinker the right to express his thoughts. Liberty is the breath of progress.

In France the people were the sport of a king's caprice. Everywhere was the shadow of the Bastile. It fell upon the sunniest field, upon the happiest home. With the king walked the headsman; back of the throne was the chamber of torture. The Church appealed to the rack, and Faith relied on the faggot. Science was an oatcast, and Philosophy, so-called, was the pander of superstition.

Nobles and priests were sacred. Peasants were vermin. Idleness sat at the banquet, and Industry gathered the crumbs and the crusts.

## II.—THE DAYS OF YOUTH.

Voltaire was of the people. In the language of that day, he had no ancestors. His real name was François Marie Arouet. His mother was Marguerite d'Aumard. This mother died when he was seven years of age. He had an elder brother, Armand, who was a devotee, very religious, and exceedingly disagreeable. This brother used to present offerings to the Church, hoping to make amends for the unbelief of his brother. So far as we know, none of his ancestors were literary people.

The Arouets had never written a line. The Abbe de Chaulieu was his godfather, and, although an abbe, was a Deist who cared nothing about religion except in connection with his salary. Voltaire's father wanted to make a

lawyer of him, but he had no taste for law. At the age of ten he entered the college of Louis Le Grand. This was a Jesuit school, and here he remained for seven years, leaving at seventeen, and never attending any other school. According to Voltaire, he learned nothing at this school but a little Greek, a good deal of Latin, and a vast amount of nonsense.

In this college of Louis Le Grand they did not teach geography, history, mathematics, or any science. This was a Catholic institution, controlled by the Jesuits. In that day the religion was defended, was protected, or supported by the State. Behind the entire creed were the bayonet, the axe, the wheel, the faggot, and the torture-chamber.

While Voltaire was attending the college of Louis Le Grand the soldiers of the king were hunting Protestants in the mountains of Cevennes for magistrates to hang on gibbets, to put to torture, to break on the wheel, or to burn at the stake.

At seventeen Voltaire determined to devote his life to literature. The father said, speaking of his two sons Armand and François: "I have a pair of fools for sons, one in verse and the other in prose."

In 1713 Voltaire, in a small way, became a diplomat. He went to The Hague attached to the French minister, and there he fell in love. The girl's mother objected. Voltaire sent his clothes to the young lady that she might visit him. Everything was discovered, and he was dismissed. To this girl he wrote a letter, and in it you will find the keynote of Voltaire: "Do not expose yourself to the fury of your mother. You know what she is capable of. You have experienced it too well. Dissemble; it is your only chance. Tell her that you have forgotten me, that you hate me; then, after telling her, love me all the more."

On account of this episode Voltaire was formally disinherited by his father. The father procured an order of arrest,



and gave his son the choice of going to prison or beyond the seas. He finally consented to become a lawyer, and says: "I have already been a week at work in the office of a solicitor learning the trade of a pettifogger."

About this time he competed for a prize, writing a poem on the king's generosity in building the new choir in the Cathedral Nôtre Dame. He did not win it. After being with the solicitor a little while, he hated the law, began to write poetry and the outlines of tragedy. Great questions were then agitating the public mind, questions that throw a flood of light upon that epoch.

In 1552 Dr. Baius took it into his head to sustain a number of propositions touching predestination to the prejudice of the doctrine of free-will. The Cordelian monks selected seventy-six of the propositions, and denounced them to the Pope as heretical; and from the Pope obtained what was called a "Bull." This Bull contained a doubtful passage, the meaning of which was dependent upon the position of a comma. The friends of Dr. Baius wrote to Rome to find where the comma ought to be placed. Rome, busy with other matter, sent as an answer a copy of the Bull in which the doubtful sentence was left without any comma. So the dispute continued.

Then, there was the great controversy between the Jansenists and Molinists. Molini was a Spanish Jesuit, who sustained the doctrine of free-will with a subtlety of his own: "Man's will is free, but God sees exactly how he will use it." The Presbyterians of our country are still wrestling with this important absurdity.

Jansenius was a French Jesuit who carried the doctrine of predestination to the extreme, asserting that God commands things that are impossible, and that Christ did not die for all.

In 1641 the Jesuits obtained a Bull condemning five propositions of Jansenius. The Jansenists thereupon denied that the five propositions—or any of

them—were found in the works of Jansenius.

This question of Jansenism and Molinism occupied France for about two hundred years.

In Voltaire's time the question had finally dwindled down to whether the five propositions condemned by the Papal Bull were in fact in the works of Jansenius. The Jansenists proved that the five propositions were not in his book, because a niece of Pascal had a diseased eye cured by the application of a thorn from the crown of Christ.

The Bull Unigenitus was launched in 1713, and then all the prisons were filled with Jansenists. This great question of predestination and free-will, of free moral agency and accountability, and being saved by the grace of God and damned for the glory of God, have occupied the mind of what we call the civilised world for many centuries. All these questions were argued *pro* and *con.* through Switzerland; all of them in Holland for centuries; in Scotland and England and New England; and millions of people are still busy harmonising fore-ordination and free-will, necessity and morality, predestination and accountability.

Louis XIV. having died, the Regent took possession, and then the prisons were opened. The Regent called for a list of all persons then in the prisons sent there at the will of the king. He found that, as to many prisoners, nobody knew any cause why they had been in prison. They had been forgotten. Many of the prisoners did not know themselves, and could not guess why they had been arrested. One Italian had been in the Bastille thirty-three years without ever knowing why. On his arrival in Paris, thirty-three years before, he was arrested and sent to prison. He had grown old. He had survived his family and friends. When the rest were liberated he asked to remain where he was, and lived there the rest of his life. The old prisoners were pardoned; but in a little while their places were taken by new ones.

At this time Voltaire was not interested in the great world ; knew very little of religion or of government. He was busy writing poetry, busy thinking of comedies and tragedies. He was full of life. All his fancies were winged, like moths.

He was charged with having written some cutting epigrams. He was exiled to Tulle, three hundred miles away. From this place he wrote in the true vein : "I am at a chateau, a place that would be the most agreeable in the world if I had not been exiled to it, and where there is nothing wanting for my perfect happiness except the liberty of leaving. It would be delicious to remain if I only were allowed to go."

At last the exile was allowed to return. Again he was arrested ; this time sent to the Bastille, where he remained for nearly a year. While in prison he changed his name from François Marie Arouet to Voltaire, and by that name he has since been known.

Voltaire, as full of life as summer is full of blossoms, giving his ideas upon all subjects at the expense of prince and king, was exiled to England. From sunny France he took his way to the mists and fogs of Albion. He became acquainted with the highest and the best in Britain. He met Pope, a most wonderful verbal mechanic, a maker of artificial flowers, very much like natural ones, except that they lack perfume and the seeds of suggestion. He made the acquaintance of Young, who wrote *The Night Thoughts*—Young, a fine old hypocrite with a virtuous imagination, a gentleman who electioneered with the king's mistress that he might be made a bishop. He became acquainted with Chesterfield—all manners, no man ; with Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, who loved to see the sun rise in bed and visit the country in town ; with Swift, whose poisoned arrows were then festering in the flesh of Mr. Bull—Swift, as wicked as he was witty and as heartless as he was humorous—with Swift, a dean and a devil ; with Congreve, whom Addison thought superior to Shakespeare, and

who never wrote but one great line : "The cathedral looking tranquillity."

### III.—THE MORN OF MANHOOD.

Voltaire began to think, to doubt, to inquire. He studied the history of the Church, of the creed. He found that the religion of his time rested on the inspiration of the Scriptures, the infallibility of the Church, the dreams of insane hermits, the absurdities of the Fathers, the mistakes and falsehoods of saints, the hysteria of nuns, the cunning of priests, and the stupidity of the people. He found that the Emperor Constantine, who lifted Christianity into power, murdered his wife Fausta and his eldest son Chrispus the same year that he convened the Council of Nice to decide whether Christ was a man or the Son of God. The Council decided, in the year 325, that Christ was consubstantial with the Father. He found that the Church was indebted to a husband who assassinated his wife, a father who murdered his son, for settling the vexed question of the divinity of the Saviour. He found that Theodosius called a council at Constantinople in 381, by which it was decided that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father ; that Theodosius the younger assembled a council at Ephesus in 431 that declared the Virgin Mary to be the mother of God ; that the Emperor Marcian called another council at Chalcedon in 451 that decided that Christ had two wills ; that Pognatius called another in 680 that declared that Christ had two natures to go with his two wills ; and that in 1274, at the Council of Lyons, the important fact was found that the Holy Ghost "proceeded" not only from the Father, but also from the Son, at the same time.

So it took about 1,300 years to find out a few things that had been revealed by an infinite God to his infallible Church.

Voltaire found that this insane creed had filled the world with cruelty and fear. He found that vestments were more sacred than virtues ; that images



and crosses—pieces of old bones and bits of wood—were more precious than the rights and lives of men; and that the keepers of these relics were the enemies of the human race.

With all the energy of his nature, with every faculty of his mind, he attacked this “Triumphant Beast.”

Voltaire was the apostle of common sense. He knew that there could have been no primitive or first language from which all other languages had been formed. He knew that every language had been influenced by the surroundings of the people. He knew that the language of snow and ice was not the language of palm and flower. He knew also that there had been no miracle in language. He knew that it was impossible that the story of the Tower of Babel should be true. He knew that everything in the whole world had been natural. He was the enemy of alchemy, not only in language, but in science. One passage from him is enough to show his philosophy in this regard. He says: “To transmute iron into gold two things are necessary—first, the annihilation of the iron; second, the creation of gold.”

Voltaire gave us the philosophy of history.

Voltaire was a man of humour, of good nature, of cheerfulness. He despised with all his heart the philosophy of Calvin—the creed of the sombre, of the severe, of the unnatural. He pitied those who needed the aid of religion to be honest, to be cheerful. He had the courage to enjoy the present, and the philosophy to bear what the future might bring. And yet for more than a hundred and fifty years the Christian world has fought this man and has maligned his memory. In every Christian pulpit his name has been pronounced with scorn, and every pulpit has been an arsenal of slander. He is one man of whom no orthodox minister has ever told the truth. He has been denounced equally by Catholics and Protestants.

Priests and ministers, bishops and

exhorters, presiding elders and popes, have filled the world with slanders, with calumnies about Voltaire. I am amazed that ministers will not, or cannot, tell the truth about an enemy of the Church. As a matter of fact, for more than one thousand years almost every pulpit has been a mint in which slanders have been coined.

Voltaire made up his mind to destroy the superstition of his time.

He fought with every weapon that genius could devise or use. He was the greatest of all caricaturists, and he used this wonderful gift without mercy. For pure, crystallised wit he had no equal. The art of flattery was carried by him to the height of an exact science. He knew and practised every subterfuge. He fought the army of hypocrisy and pretence, the army of faith and falsehood.

Voltaire was annoyed by the meaner and baser spirits of his time, by the cringers and crawlers, by the fawners and pretenders, by those who wished to gain the favour of priests, the patronage of nobles. Sometimes he allowed himself to be annoyed by these wretches; sometimes he attacked them. And but for these attacks long ago they would have been forgotten. In the amber of his genius Voltaire preserved these insects, these tarantulas, these scorpions.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever; this was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavoured to prevent Christians from murdering each other, and did what he could to civilise the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect, and love of the Christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, had he mumbled Latin prayers, counted beads, crossed himself, devoured now and then the flesh of God, and carried faggots to the feet of



Philosophy in the name of Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying a sight of the damned.

If he had only adopted the creed of his time; if he had asserted that a God of infinite power and mercy had created millions and billions of human beings to suffer eternal pain, and all for the sake of his glorious justice; that he had given his power of attorney to a cunning and cruel Italian Pope, authorising him to save the soul of his mistress and send honest wives to hell; if he had given to the nostrils of this God the odour of burning flesh, the incense of the faggot; if he had filled his ears with the shrieks of the tortured, the music of the rack, he would now be known as Saint Voltaire.

For many years this restless man filled Europe with the product of his brain—essays, epigrams, epics, comedies, tragedies, histories, poems, novels, representing every phase and every faculty of the human mind. At the same time engrossed in business, full of speculation, making money like a millionaire, busy with the gossip of courts, and even with the scandals of priests. At the same time alive to all the discoveries of science and the theories of philosophers, and in this Babel never forgetting for one moment to assail the monster of superstition. Sleeping and waking, he hated the Church. With the eyes of Argus he watched, and with the arms of Briareus he struck. For sixty years he waged continuous and unrelenting war, sometimes in the open field, sometimes striking from the hedges of opportunity, taking care during all this time to remain independent of all men. He was in the highest sense successful. He lived like a prince, became one of the powers of Europe, and in him, for the first time, literature was crowned.

It has been claimed by the Christian critics that Voltaire was irreverent; that he examined sacred things without solemnity; that he refused to remove his shoes in the presence of the Burning Bush; that he smiled at the geology of

Moses, the astronomical ideas of Joshua; and that the biography of Jonah filled him with laughter. They say that these stories, these sacred impossibilities, these inspired falsehoods, should be read and studied with a believing mind in humbleness of spirit; that they should be examined prayerfully, asking God at the same time to give us strength to triumph over the conclusions of our reason. These critics imagine that a falsehood can be old enough to be venerable, and that to stand covered in its presence is the act of an irreverent scoffer. Voltaire approached the mythology of the Jews precisely as he did the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, or the mythology of the Chinese or the Iroquois Indians. There is nothing in this world too sacred to be investigated, to be understood. The philosopher does not hide. Secresy is not the friend of truth. No man should be reverent at the expense of his reason. Nothing should be worshipped until the reason has been convinced that it is worthy of worship.

Against all miracles, against all holy superstition, against sacred mistakes, he shot the arrows of ridicule.

These arrows, winged by fancy, sharpened by wit, poisoned by truth, always reached the centre.

It is claimed by many that anything, the best and holiest, can be ridiculed. As a matter of fact, he who attempts to ridicule the truth ridicules himself. He becomes the fool of his own laughter.

The mind of man is many-sided. Truth must be, and is, willing to be tested in every way, tested by all the senses.

But in what way can the absurdity of the "real presence" be answered except by banter, by raillery, by ridicule, by persiflage? How are you going to convince a man who believes that when he swallows the sacred wafer he has eaten the entire Trinity, and that a priest drinking a drop of wine has devoured the Infinite? How are you to reason with a man who believes that if any of the sacred wafers are left over they should

be put in a secure place so that mice should not eat God?

What effect will logic have upon a religious gentleman who firmly believes that a God of infinite compassion sent two bears to tear thirty or forty children in pieces for laughing at a bald-headed prophet?

How are such people to be answered? How can they be brought to a sense of their absurdity? They must feel in their flesh the arrows of ridicule.

So Voltaire has been called a mocker.

What did he mock? He mocked kings that were unjust, kings who cared nothing for the sufferings of their subjects. He mocked the titled fools of his day. He mocked the corruption of courts, the meanness, the tyranny, and the brutality of judges. He mocked the absurd and cruel laws, the barbarous customs. He mocked popes and cardinals and bishops and priests, and all the hypocrites on the earth. He mocked historians who filled their books with lies, and philosophers who defended superstition. He mocked the haters of liberty, the persecutors of their fellow-men. He mocked the arrogance, the cruelty, the impudence, and the unspeakable baseness of his time.

He has been blamed because he used the weapon of ridicule.

Hypocrisy has always hated laughter, and always will. Absurdity detests humour, and stupidity despises wit. Voltaire was the master of ridicule. He ridiculed the absurd, the impossible. He ridiculed the mythologies and the miracles, the stupid lives and lies of the saints. He found pretence and mendacity crowned by credulity. He found the ignorant many controlled by the cunning and cruel few. He found the historian, saturated with superstition, filling his volumes with the details of the impossible, and he found the scientists satisfied with "they say."

Voltaire had the instinct of the probable. He knew the law of average, the sea level; he had the idea of proportion, and so he ridiculed the mental mon-

strosities and deformities—the *non sequiturs*—of his day. Aristotle said women had more teeth than men. This was repeated again and again by the Catholic scientists of the eighteenth century. Voltaire counted the teeth. The rest were satisfied with "they say."

Voltaire for many years, in spite of his surroundings, in spite of almost universal tyranny and oppression, was a believer in God and what he was pleased to call the religion of Nature. He attacked the creed of his time because it was dishonourable to his God. He thought of the Deity as a father, as the fountain of justice, intelligence, and mercy, and the creed of the Catholic Church made him a monster of cruelty and stupidity. He attacked the Bible with all the weapons at his command. He assailed its geology, its astronomy, its ideas of justice, its laws and customs, its absurd and useless miracles, its foolish wonders, its ignorance on all subjects, its insane prophecies, its cruel threats, and its extravagant promises.

At the same time he praised the God of nature, the God who gives us rain and light and food and flowers and health and happiness, he who fills the world with youth and beauty.

Attacked on every side, he fought with every weapon that wit, logic, reason, scorn, contempt, laughter, pathos, and indignation could sharpen, form, devise, or use. He often apologised, and the apology was an insult. He often recanted, and the recantation was a thousand times worse than the thing recanted. He took it back by giving more. In the name of eulogy he flayed his victim. In his praise there was poison. He often advanced by retreating, and asserted by retraction.

He did not intend to give priests the satisfaction of seeing him burn or suffer. Upon this very point of recanting he wrote: "They say I must retract. Very willingly. I will declare that Pascal is always right; that, if St. Luke and St. Mark contradict one another, it is only another proof of the truth of religion to



those who know how to understand such things; and that another lovely proof of religion is that it is unintelligible. I will even avow that all priests are gentle and disinterested; that Jesuits are honest people; that monks are neither proud nor given to intrigue, and that their odour is agreeable; that the Holy Inquisition is the triumph of humanity and tolerance. In a word, I will say all that may be desired of me, provided they leave me in repose, and will not persecute a man who has done harm to none."

He gave the best years of his wondrous life to succour the oppressed, to shield the defenceless, to reverse infamous decrees, to rescue the innocent, to reform the laws of France, to do away with torture, to soften the hearts of priests, to enlighten judges, to instruct kings, to civilise the people, and to banish from the heart of man the love and lust of war.

You may think that I have said too much; that I have placed this man too high. Let me tell you what Goethe, the great German, said of this man: "If you wish depth, genius, imagination, taste, reason, sensibility, philosophy, elevation, originality, nature, intellect, fancy, rectitude, facility, flexibility, precision, art, abundance, variety, fertility, warmth, magic, charm, grace, force, an eagle sweep of vision, vast understanding, instruction rich, tone excellent, urbanity, suavity, delicacy, correctness, purity, clearness, eloquence, harmony, brilliancy, rapidity, gaiety, pathos, sublimity and universality, perfection indeed, behold Voltaire."

Even Carlyle, that old Scotch terrier, with the growl of a grizzly bear, who attacked shams, as I have sometimes thought, because he hated rivals, was forced to admit that Voltaire gave the death-stab to modern superstition!

It is the duty of every man to destroy the superstitions of his time, and yet there are thousands of men and women, fathers and mothers, who repudiate with their whole hearts the creeds of superstition, and still allow their children to be

taught these lies. They allow their imaginations to be poisoned with the dogma of eternal pain. They allow arrogant and ignorant parsons, meek and foolish teachers, to sow the seeds of barbarism in the minds of their children—seeds that will fill their lives with fear and pain. Nothing can be more important to a human being than to be free and to live without fear.

It is far better to be a mortal free man than an immortal slave.

Fathers and mothers should do their utmost to make their children free. They should teach them to doubt, to investigate, to inquire; and every father and mother should know that by the cradle of every child, as by the cradle of the infant Hercules, crawls the serpent of superstition.

#### IV.—THE SCHEME OF NATURE.

At that time it was pretended by the believers in God that the plan, or the scheme of nature, was not cruel; that the lower was sacrificed for the benefit of the higher; that while life lived upon life, while animals lived upon each other, and while man was the king or sovereign of all, still the higher lived upon the lower. Consequently, a lower life was sacrificed that a higher life might exist. This reasoning satisfied many. Yet there were thousands that could not see why the lower should be sacrificed, or why all joy should be born of pain. But since the construction of the microscope, since man has been allowed to look towards the infinitely small as well as towards the infinitely great, he finds that our fathers were mistaken when they laid down the proposition that only the lower life was sacrificed for the sake of the higher.

Now, we find that the lives of all visible animals are liable to be, and in countless cases are, destroyed by a far lower life; that man himself is destroyed by the microbes, the bacilli, the infinitesimal. We find that for the sake of preserving the yellow fever germs millions and millions have died, and that whole



nations have been decimated for the sake of the little beast that gives us the cholera. We have also found that there are animals—call them what you please—that live on the substance of the human heart; others that prefer the lungs; others, again, so delicate in their palate that they insist on devouring the optic nerve, and when they have destroyed the sight of one eye have sense enough to bore through the cartilage of the nose to attack the other. Thus we find the other side of this proposition. At first sight the lower seemed to be sacrificed for the sake of the higher, but on closer inspection the highest are sacrificed for the sake of the lowest.

Voltaire was, for a long time, a believer in the optimism of Pope: "All partial evil, universal good." This is a very fine philosophy for the fortunate. It suits the rich. It is flattering to kings and priests. It sounds well. It is a fine stone to throw at a beggar. It enables you to bear with great fortitude the misfortunes of others.

It is not the philosophy for those who suffer, for industry clothed in rags, for patriotism in prison, for honesty in want, or for virtuous outcasts. It is a philosophy of a class, of a few, and of the few who are fortunate; and when misfortune overtakes them this philosophy fades and withers.

In 1755 came the earthquake at Lisbon. This frightful disaster became an immense interrogation. The optimist was compelled to ask: "What was my God doing? Why did the Universal Father crush to shapelessness thousands of his poor children, even at the moment when they were upon their knees returning thanks to him?"

What could be done with this horror? If earthquake there must be, why did it not occur in some uninhabited desert, on some wide waste of sea? This frightful fact changed the theology of Voltaire. He became convinced that this is not the best possible of all worlds. He became convinced that evil is evil here, now, and for ever.

The Theist was silent. The earthquake denied the existence of God.

#### V.—HIS HUMANITY.

Toulouse was a favoured town. It was rich in relics. The people were as ignorant as wooden images; but they had in their possession the dried bodies of seven apostles, the bones of many of the infants slain by Herod, part of a dress of the Virgin Mary, and lots of skulls and skeletons of the infallible idiots known as saints.

In this city the people celebrated every year with great joy two holy events—the expulsion of the Huguenots and the blessed massacre of St. Bartholomew. The citizens of Toulouse had been educated and civilised by the Church.

A few Protestants, mild because in the minority, lived among these jackals and tigers.

One of these Protestants was Jean Calas—a small dealer in dry goods. For forty years he had been in this business, and his character was without a stain. He was honest, kind, and agreeable. He had a wife and six children—four sons and two daughters. One of the sons became a Catholic. The eldest son, Marc Antoine, disliked his father's business, and studied law. He could not be allowed to practise unless he became a Catholic. He tried to get his licence by concealing that he was a Protestant. He was discovered—grew morose. Finally he became discouraged, and committed suicide by hanging himself one evening in his father's store.

The bigots of Toulouse started the story that his parents had killed him to prevent his becoming a Catholic.

On this frightful charge the father, mother, one son, a servant, and one guest at their house were arrested.

The dead son was considered a martyr, the Church taking possession of the body.

This happened in 1761.

There was what was called a trial. There was no evidence, not the slightest,

except hearsay. All the facts were in favour of the accused.

The united strength of the defendants could not have done the deed.

Jean Calas was doomed to torture and to death upon the wheel. This was on March 9th, 1762, and the sentence was to be carried out the next day.

On the morning of the 10th the father was taken to the torture room. The executioner and his assistants were sworn on the cross to administer the torture according to the judgment of the court.

They bound him by the wrists to an iron ring in the stone wall four feet from the ground, and his feet to another ring in the floor. Then they shortened the ropes and chains until every joint in his arms and legs was dislocated. Then he was questioned. He declared that he was innocent. Then the ropes were again shortened, until life fluttered in the torn body; but he remained firm.

This was called the "question ordinaire."

Again the magistrates exhorted the victim to confess, and again he refused, saying that there was nothing to confess.

Then came the "question extraordinaire."

Into the mouth of the victim was placed a horn holding three pints of water. In this way thirty pints of water were forced into the body of the sufferer. The pain was beyond description, and yet Jean Calas remained firm.

He was then carried to the scaffold in a tumbril. He was bound to a wooden cross that lay on the scaffold. The executioner then took a bar of iron, broke each leg and each arm in two places, striking eleven blows in all. He was then left to die if he could. He lived for two hours, declaring his innocence to the last. He was slow to die, and so the executioner strangled him. Then his poor lacerated, bleeding, and broken body was chained to a stake and burned.

All this was a spectacle—a festival—for the savages of Toulouse. What would they have done if their hearts had

not been softened by the glad tidings of great joy—peace on earth and goodwill to men?

But this was not all. The property of the family was confiscated; the son was released on condition that he become a Catholic; the servant if she would enter a convent. The two daughters were consigned to a convent, and the heart-broken widow was allowed to wander where she would.

Voltaire heard of this case. In a moment his soul was on fire. He took one of the sons under his roof. He wrote a history of the case. He corresponded with kings and queens, with chancellors and lawyers. If money was needed, he advanced it. For years he filled Europe with the echoes of the groans of Jean Calas. He succeeded. The horrible judgment was annulled, the poor victim declared innocent, and thousands of dollars raised to support the mother and family.

This was the work of Voltaire.

#### THE SIRVEN FAMILY.

Sirven, a Protestant, lived in Languedoc with his wife and three daughters. The housekeeper of the bishop wanted to make one of the daughters a Catholic.

The law allowed the bishop to take the child of Protestants from their parents for the sake of its soul. This little girl was so taken and placed in a convent. She ran away, and came back to her parents. Her poor little body was covered with the marks of the convent whip.

"Suffer little children to come unto me."

The child was out of her mind; suddenly she disappeared, and a few days after her little body was found in a well three miles from home.

The cry was raised that her folks had murdered her to keep her from becoming a Catholic.

This happened only a little way from the Christian city of Toulouse while Jean Calas was in prison. The Sirvens

knew that a trial would end in conviction. They fled. In their absence they were convicted, their property confiscated; the parents sentenced to die by the hangman, the daughters to be under the gallows during the execution of their mother, and then to be exiled.

The family fled in the midst of winter; the married daughter gave birth to a child in the snows of the Alps; the mother died; and, at last reaching Switzerland, the father found himself without means of support.

They went to Voltaire. He espoused their cause. He took care of them, gave them the means to live, and laboured to annul the sentence that had been pronounced against them for nine long and weary years. He appealed to kings for money, to Catharine II. of Russia, and to hundreds of others. He was successful. He said of this case: The Sirvens were tried and condemned in two hours in January, 1762, and now in January, 1772, after ten years of effort, they have been restored to their rights.

This was the work of Voltaire. Why should the worshippers of God hate the lovers of men? —

#### THE ESPENASSE CASE.

Espenasse was a Protestant, of good estate. In 1740 he received into his house a Protestant clergyman, to whom he gave supper and lodging.

In a country where priests repeated the parable of the "Good Samaritan" this was a crime.

For this crime Espenasse was tried, convicted, and sentenced to the galleys for life.

When he had been imprisoned for twenty-three years his case came to the knowledge of Voltaire, and he was, through the efforts of Voltaire, released and restored to his family.

This was the work of Voltaire. There is not time to tell of the case of General Lally, of the English General Byng, of the niece of Corneille, of the Jesuit Adam, of the writers, dramatists, actors,

widows and orphans, for whose benefit he gave his influence, his money, and his time. But I will tell another case:—

In 1765, at the town of Abbeville, an old wooden cross on a bridge had been mutilated—whittled with a knife—a terrible crime. Sticks, when crossing each other, were far more sacred than flesh and blood. Two young men were suspected—the Chevalier de la Barre and D'Etallonde. D'Etallonde fled to Prussia, and enlisted as a common soldier.

La Barre remained and stood his trial.

He was convicted without the slightest evidence, and he and D'Etallonde were both sentenced:—

*First*, to endure the torture, ordinary and extraordinary.

*Second*, to have their tongues torn out by the roots with pincers of iron.

*Third*, to have their right hands cut off at the door of the church.

*Fourth*, to be bound to stakes by chains of iron and burned to death by a slow fire.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Remembering this, the judges mitigated the sentence by providing that their heads should be cut off before their bodies were given to the flames.

The case was appealed to Paris; heard by a court composed of twenty-five judges, learned in the law, and the judgment was confirmed.

The sentence was carried out on July 1st, 1766.

When Voltaire heard of this judicial infamy he made up his mind to abandon France. He wished to leave for ever a country where such cruelties were possible.

He wrote a pamphlet, giving the history of the case.

He ascertained the whereabouts of D'Etallonde, wrote in his behalf to the King of Prussia; got him released from the army; took him to his own house; kept him for a year and a half; saw that he was instructed in drawing, mathematics, and engineering; and had at last the



happiness of seeing him a captain of engineers in the army of Frederick the Great.

Such a man was Voltaire. He was the champion of the oppressed and the helpless. He was the Cæsar to whom the victims of Church and State appealed. He stood for the intellect and heart of his time.

And yet for a hundred and fifty years those who love their enemies have exhausted the vocabulary of hate, the ingenuity of malice and mendacity, in their efforts to save their stupid creeds from the genius of Voltaire.

From a great height he surveyed the world. His horizon was large. He had some vices—these he shared in common with priests; his virtues were his own.

He was in favour of universal education, of the development of the brain. The Church despised him. He wished to put the knowledge of the whole world within the reach of all. Every priest was his enemy. He wished to drive from the gate of Eden the cherubim of superstition, so that the children of Adam might return and eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The Church opposed this because it had the fruit of the tree of ignorance for sale.

He was one of the foremost friends of the *Encyclopædia*, of Diderot, and did all in his power to give information to all. So far as principles were concerned, he was the greatest lawyer of his time. I do not mean that he knew the terms and decisions, but that he clearly perceived not only what the law should be, but its application and administration. He understood the philosophy of evidence, the difference between suspicion and proof, between belief and knowledge, and he did more to reform the laws of the kingdom and the abuses at courts than all the lawyers and statesmen of his time.

At school he read and studied the works of Cicero—the lord of language—probably the greatest orator that has uttered speech, and the words of the Roman remained in his brain. He became, in spite of the spirit of caste, a

believer in the equality of men. He said:—

“Men are born equal.”

“Let us respect virtue and merit.”

“Let us have it in the heart that men are equal.”

He was an abolitionist—the enemy of slavery in all its forms. He did not think that the colour of one man gave him the right to steal from another man on account of that man's colour. He was the friend of serf and peasant, and did what he could to protect animals, wives and children, from the fury of those who loved their neighbours as themselves.

It was Voltaire who sowed the seeds of liberty in the heart and brain of Franklin, of Jefferson, and Thomas Paine.

Puffendorf had taken the ground that slavery was in part founded on contract.

Voltaire said: “Show me the contract, and if it is signed by the party to be the slave I may believe you.”

He thought it absurd that God should drown the fathers and then come and die for the children. This is as good as the remark of Diderot: “If Christ had the power to defend himself from the Jews and refused to use it, he was guilty of suicide.”

He had sense enough to know that the flame of the faggot does not enlighten the mind. He hated the cruel and pitied the victims of Church and State. He was the friend of the unfortunate, the helper of the striving. He laughed at the pomp of kings, the pretensions of priests. He was a believer in the natural, and abhorred with all his heart the miraculous and absurd.

Voltaire was not a saint. He was educated by the Jesuits. He was never troubled about the salvation of his soul. All the theological disputes excited his laughter, the creeds his pity, and the conduct of bigots his contempt. He was much better than a saint.

Most of the Christians in his day kept their religion not for every-day use, but

for disaster, as ships carry lifeboats to be used only in the stress of storm.

Voltaire believed in the religion of humanity, of good and generous deeds. For many centuries the Church had painted virtue so ugly, sour, and cold that vice was regarded as beautiful. Voltaire taught the beauty of the useful, the hatefulness and hideousness of superstition.

He was not the greatest of poets or of dramatists; but he was the greatest man of his time, the greatest friend of freedom, and the deadliest foe of superstition.

He did more to break the chains of superstition, to drive the phantoms of fear from the heart and brain, to destroy the authority of the Church, and to give liberty to the world, than any other of the sons of men. In the highest, the holiest, sense he was the most profoundly religious man of his time.

#### VI.—THE RETURN.

After an exile of twenty-seven years, occupying during all that time a first place in the civilised world, Voltaire returned to Paris. His journey was a triumphal march. He was received as a conqueror. The Academy, the Immortals, came to meet him—a compliment that had never been paid to royalty. His tragedy of *Irene* was performed. At the theatre he was crowned with laurel, covered with flowers; he was intoxicated with perfume and with incense of worship. He was the supreme French poet, standing above them all. Among the literary men of the world he stood first—a monarch by the divine right of genius. There were three mighty forces in France—the throne, the altar, and Voltaire.

The King was the enemy of Voltaire. The Court could have nothing to do with him. The Church, malign and morose, was waiting for her revenge; and yet, such was the reputation of this man—such the hold he had upon the people—that he became, in spite of throne, in spite of Church, the idol of France.

He was an old man of eighty-four.

He had been surrounded with the comforts, the luxuries of life. He was a man of great wealth—the richest writer that the world had known. Among the literary men of the earth he stood first. He was an intellectual king—one who had built his own throne and had woven the purple of his own power. He was a man of genius. The Catholic God had allowed him the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery—of almost worship. He stood at the summit of his age.

The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would forget, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire.

Towards the last of May, 1778, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey.

"Two days before his death his nephew went to seek the Curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Abbé Guatier, and brought them into his uncle's sick chamber. 'Ah well!' said Voltaire, 'give them my compliments and my thanks.' The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of Saint-Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick man pushed one of his hands against the Curé's coif, shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, 'Let me die in peace.' The Curé seemingly considered his person soiled and his coif dishonoured by the touch of a philosopher. He made the nurse give him a little brushing, and went out with Abbé Guatier."

He expired, says Wagnière, on May 30th, 1778, at about a quarter-past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity. A few moments before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his *valet de chambre*, who was watching by him, pressed it, and said: "Adieu,



my dear Morand, I am gone." These were his last words. Like a peaceful river with green and shaded banks, he flowed without a murmur into the waveless sea, where life is rest.

From this death, so simple and serene, so kind, so philosophic and tender, so natural and peaceful; from these words, so utterly destitute of cant or dramatic touch, all the frightful pictures, all the despairing utterances, have been drawn and made. From these materials, and from these alone—or, rather, in spite of these facts—have been constructed by priests and clergymen and their dupes all the shameless lies about the death of this great and wonderful man; a man compared with whom all of his calumniators, dead and living, were, and are, but dust and vermin.

Let us be honest. Did all the priests of Rome increase the mental wealth of man as much as Bruno? Did all the priests of France do as great a work for the civilisation of the world as Voltaire or Diderot? Did all the ministers of Scotland add as much to the sum of human knowledge as David Hume? Have all the clergymen, monks, friars, ministers, priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes, from the Day of Pentecost to the last election, done as much for human liberty as Thomas Paine?

What would the world be if infidels had never been?

The infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of all the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.

Why should it be taken for granted that the men who devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellow-men should have been hissed at in the hour of death by the snakes of conscience, while men who defended slavery, practised polygamy, justified the stealing of babes from the breasts of mothers, and lashed

the naked back of unpaid labour, are supposed to have passed smilingly from earth to the embraces of the angels? Why should we think that the brave thinkers, the investigators, the honest men, must have left the crumbling shore of time in dread and fear, while the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the inventors and users of thumb-screws, of iron boots, and racks; the burners and tearers of human flesh; the stealers, the whippers, and the enslavers of men; the buyers and beaters of maidens, mothers, and babes; the founders of the Inquisition; the makers of chains; the builders of dungeons; the calumniators of the living; the slanderers of the dead, and even the murderers of Jesus Christ, all died in the odour of sanctity, with white, forgiven hands folded upon the breasts of peace, while the destroyers of prejudice, the apostles of humanity, the soldiers of liberty, the breakers of fetters, the creators of light, died surrounded by the fierce fiends of God?

In those days the philosophers—that is to say, the thinkers—were not buried in holy ground. It was feared that their principles might contaminate the ashes of the just. And they also feared that on the morning of the resurrection they might, in a moment of confusion, slip into heaven. Some were burned, and their ashes scattered; and the bodies of some were thrown naked to beasts, and others buried in unholy earth.

Voltaire knew the history of Adrienne Le Couvreur, a beautiful actress, denied burial.

After all, we do feel an interest in what is to become of our bodies. There is a modesty that belongs to death. Upon this subject Voltaire was infinitely sensitive. It was that he might be buried that he went through the farce of confession, of absolution, and of the last sacrament. The priests knew that he was not in earnest, and Voltaire knew that they would not allow him to be buried in any of the cemeteries of Paris.

His death was kept a secret. The



Abbé Mignot made arrangements for the burial at Romilli-on-the-Seine, more than one hundred miles from Paris. On Sunday evening on the last day of May, 1778, the body of Voltaire, clad in a dressing-gown, clothed to resemble an invalid, posed to simulate life, was placed in a carriage; at its side a servant, whose business it was to keep it in position. To this carriage were attached six horses, so that people might think a great lord was going to his estates. Another carriage followed, in which were a grand-nephew and two cousins of Voltaire. All night they travelled, and on the following day arrived at the courtyard of the Abbey. The necessary papers were shown, the mass was performed in the presence of the body, and Voltaire found burial. A few moments afterwards the Prior, who "for charity had given a little earth," received from his Bishop a menacing letter forbidding the burial of Voltaire. It was too late.

Voltaire was dead. The foundations of State and Throne had been sappcd. The people were becoming acquainted with the real kings and with the actual priests. Unknown men born in misery and want, men whose fathers and mothers had been pavement for the rich, were rising towards the light, and their shadowy faces were emerging from darkness. Labour and thought became friends—that is, the gutter and the attic fraternised; the monsters of the night and the angels of the dawn—the first thinking of revenge, and the others dreaming of equality, liberty, and fraternity.

#### VII.—THE DEATH-BED ARGUMENT.

All kinds of criminals, except infidels, meet death with reasonable serenity. As a rule, there is nothing in the death of a pirate to cast any discredit on his profession. The murderer upon the scaffold, with a priest on either side, smilingly exhorts the multitude to meet him in heaven. The man who has succeeded in making his home a hell meets death

without a quiver, provided he has never expressed any doubt as to the divinity of Christ or the eternal "procession" of the Holy Ghost. The king who has waged cruel and useless war, who has filled countries with widows and fatherless children, with the maimed and diseased, and who has succeeded in offering to the Moloch of ambition the best and bravest of his subjects, dies like a saint.

All the believing kings are in heaven—all the doubting philosophers in perdition. All the persecutors sleep in peace, and the ashes of those who burned their brothers sleep in consecrated ground. Libraries could hardly contain the names of the Christian wretches who have filled the world with violence and death in defence of book and creed, and yet they all died the death of the righteous, and no priest, no minister, describes the agony and fear, the remorse and horror, with which their guilty souls were filled in the last moments of their lives. These men had never doubted—they had never thought; they accepted the creed as they did the fashion of their clothes. They were not infidels—they could not be: they had been baptised; they had not denied the divinity of Christ; they had partaken of the "Last Supper." They respected priests; they admitted that Christ had two natures and the same number of wills; they admitted that the Holy Ghost had "proceeded," and that, according to the multiplication-table of heaven, once one is three and three times one is one. They believed that while kings and priests did nothing worse than to make their fellows wretched, that so long as they only butchered and burnt the innocent and helpless, God would maintain the strictest neutrality; but when some honest man, some great and tender soul, expressed a doubt as to the truth of the Scriptures, or prayed to the wrong God, or to the right one by the wrong name, then the real God leaped like a wounded tiger upon his victim, and from his quivering flesh tore his wretched soul.

There is no recorded instance where

the uplifted hand of murder has been paralysed, no truthful account in all the literature of the world of the innocent child being shielded by God. Thousands of crimes are being committed every day; men are at this moment lying in wait for their human prey; wives are whipped and crushed, driven to insanity and death; little children begging for mercy, lifting imploring, tear-filled eyes to the brutal faces of fathers and mothers; sweet girls are deceived, lured and outraged. But God has no time to prevent these things, no time to defend the good and protect the pure. He is too busy numbering hairs and watching sparrows. He listens for blasphemy; looks for persons who laugh at priests; examines baptismal registers; watches professors in college who begin to doubt the geology of Moses and the astronomy of Joshua. He does not particularly object to stealing, if you won't swear. A great many persons have fallen dead in the act of taking God's name in vain; millions of men, women, and children have been stolen from their homes and used as beasts of burden; but no one engaged in this infamy has ever been touched by the wrathful hand of God.

Now and then a man of genius, of sense, of intellectual honesty, has appeared. Such men have denounced the superstitions of their day. They have pitied the multitude. To see priests devour the substance of the people—priests who made begging one of the learned professions—filled them with loathing and contempt. These men were honest enough to tell their thoughts, brave enough to speak the truth. Then they were denounced, tried, tortured, killed by rack or flame. But some escaped the fury of the fiends who love their enemies, and died naturally in their beds. It would not do for the Church to admit that they died peacefully. That would show that religion was not essential at the last moment. Superstition gets its power from the terror of death. It would not

do to have the common people understand that a man could deny the Bible, refuse to kiss the cross, contend that Humanity was greater than Christ, and then die as sweetly as Torquemada did after pouring molten lead into the ears of an honest man, or as calmly as Calvin after he had burned Servetus, or as peacefully as King David after advising with his last breath one son to assassinate another.

The Church has taken great pains to show that the last moments of all infidels (whom Christians did not succeed in burning) were infinitely wretched and despairing. It was alleged that words could not paint the horrors that were endured by a dying infidel. Every good Christian was expected to, and generally did, believe these accounts. They have been told and re-told in every pulpit of the world. Protestant ministers have repeated the lies invented by Catholic priests, and Catholics, by a kind of theological comity, have sworn to the lies told by the Protestants. Upon this point they have always stood together, and will as long as the same falsehood can be used by both.

Instead of doing these things, Voltaire wilfully closed his eyes to the light of the Gospel, examined the Bible for himself, advocated intellectual liberty, struck from the brain the fetters of an arrogant faith, assisted the weak, cried out against the torture of man, appealed to reason, endeavoured to establish universal toleration, succoured the indigent, and defended the oppressed.

He demonstrated that the origin of all religions is the same—the same mysteries, the same miracles, the same imposture, the same temples and ceremonies, the same kind of founders, apostles, and dupes, the same promises and threats, the same pretence of goodness and forgiveness, and the practice of the same persecution and murder. He proved that religion made enemies, philosophy friends, and that above the rights of gods were the rights of man.

These were his crimes. Such a man



God would not suffer to die in peace. If allowed to meet death with a smile, others might follow his example, until none would be left to light the holy fires of the *auto-da-fe*. It would not do for so great, so successful, an enemy of the Church to die without leaving some shriek of fear, some shudder of remorse, some ghastly prayer of chattered horror, uttered by lips covered with blood and foam.

For many centuries the theologians have taught that an unbeliever—an infidel, one who spoke or wrote against their creed—could not meet death with composure; that in his last moments God would fill his conscience with the serpents of remorse.

For a thousand years the clergy have manufactured the facts to fit this theory—this infamous conception of the duty of man and the justice of God.

The theologians have insisted that crimes against man were, and are, as nothing compared with crimes against God.

Upon the death-bed subject the clergy grow eloquent. When describing the shudderings and shrieks of the dying unbeliever, their eyes glitter with delight.

It is a festival.

They are no longer men. They become hyenas. They dig open graves. They devour the dead.

It is a banquet.

Unsatisfied still, they paint the terrors of hell. They gaze at the souls of the infidels writhing in the coils of the worm that never dies. They see them in flames, in oceans of fire, in gulfs of pain, in abysses of despair. They shout with joy. They applaud.

It is an *auto-da-fe*, presided over by God.

#### VII.—THE SECOND RETURN.

For four hundred years the Bastile had been the outward symbol of oppression. Within its walls the noblest had perished. It was a perpetual threat. It was the last, and often the first, argument of king and priest. Its dungeons, damp and

rayless, its massive towers, its secret cells, its instruments of torture, denied the existence of God.

In 1789, on July 14th, the people, the multitude, frenzied by suffering, stormed and captured the Bastile. The battle-cry was "Vive Voltaire!"

In 1791 permission was given to place in the Pantheon the ashes of Voltaire. He had been buried 110 miles from Paris. Buried by stealth, he was to be removed by a nation. A funeral procession of a hundred miles; every village with its flags and arches; all the people anxious to honour the philosopher of France, the saviour of Calas, the destroyer of superstition.

On reaching Paris the great procession moved along the Rue St. Antoine. Here it paused, and for one night upon the ruins of the Bastile rested the body of Voltaire—rested in triumph, in glory, rested on fallen wall and broken arch, on crumbling stone still damp with tears, on rusting chain and bar and useless bolt, above the dungeons dark and deep, where light had faded from the lives of men and hope had died in breaking hearts. The conqueror resting upon the conquered. Throned upon the Bastile, the fallen fortress of Night, the body of Voltaire, from whose brain had issued the dawn.

For a moment his ashes must have felt the Promethean fire, and the old smile must have illumined once more the face of death.

The vast multitude, bowed in reverence, hushed with love and awe, heard these words uttered by a priest: "God shall be avenged."

The cry of the priest was a prophecy. Priests skulking in the shadows with faces sinister as night, ghouls in the name of the Gospel, desecrated the grave. They carried away the ashes of Voltaire.

The tomb is empty.

God is avenged.

The world is filled with his fame.

Man has conquered.

Was there in the eighteenth century a



man wearing the vestments of the Church the equal of Voltaire?

What cardinal, what bishop, what priest in France raised his voice for the rights of men? What ecclesiastic, what nobleman, took the side of the oppressed, of the peasant? Who denounced the frightful criminal code, the torture of suspected persons? What priest pleaded for the liberty of the citizen? What bishop pitied the victims of the rack? Is there the grave of a priest in France on which a lover of liberty would now drop a flower or a tear? Is there a tomb holding the ashes of a saint from which emerges one ray of light?

If there be another life, a day of judgment, no God can afford to torture in another world the man who abolished torture in this. If God be the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, he should not imprison there the men who broke the chains of slavery here. He cannot afford to make an eternal convict of Voltaire.

Voltaire was a perfect master of the French language, knowing all its moods, tenses, and declinations in fact and in feeling; playing upon it as skilfully as Paganni on his violin; finding expression for every thought and fancy; writing on the most serious subjects with the gaiety of a harlequin; plucking jests from the crumbling mouth of death; graceful as the waving of willows; dealing in double meanings that covered the asp with

flowers and flattery; master of satire and compliment, mingling them often in the same line; always interested himself, and therefore interesting others; handling thoughts, questions, subjects, as a juggler does balls, keeping them in the air with perfect ease; dressing old words in new meanings, charming, grotesque, pathetic; mingling mirth with tears, wit, and wisdom, and sometimes wickedness, logic, and laughter; with a woman's instinct knowing the sensitive nerves, just where to touch; hating arrogance of place, the stupidity of the solemn; snatching masks from priest and king; knowing the springs of action and ambition's ends; perfectly familiar with the great world; the intimate of kings and their favourites; sympathising with the oppressed and imprisoned, with the unfortunate and poor; hating tyranny, despising superstition, and loving liberty with all his heart. Such was Voltaire, writing *Œdipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, and crowding between these two tragedies the accomplishment of a thousand lives.

From his throne at the foot of the Alps he pointed the finger of scorn at every hypocrite in Europe. For half a century, past rack and stake, past dungeon and cathedral, past altar and throne, he carried with brave hands the sacred torch of Reason, whose light at last will flood the world.

## VINDICATION OF THOMAS PAINE

"To argue with a man who has renounced the use and authority of reason is like administering medicine to the dead."—THOMAS PAINE.

Peoria, October 8th, 1877.

*To the Editor of the "New York Observer."*

SIR,—Last June, in San Francisco, I offered a thousand dollars in gold—not as a wager, but as a gift—to anyone who would substantiate the absurd story that Thomas Paine died in agony and fear, frightened by the clanking chains of devils. I also offered the same amount to any minister who would prove that Voltaire did not pass away as serenely as the coming of the dawn. Afterwards I was informed that you had accepted the offer, and had called upon me to deposit the money. Acting upon this information, I sent you the following letter:—

Peoria, Ill., August 31st, 1877.

*To the Editor of the "New York Observer."*

I have been informed that you accepted in your paper an offer made by me to any clergyman in San Francisco. That offer was that I would pay one thousand dollars in gold to any minister in that city who would prove that Thomas Paine died in terror because of religious opinions he had expressed, or that Voltaire did not pass away serenely as the coming of the dawn.

For many years religious journals and ministers have been circulating certain pretended accounts of the frightful agonies endured by Paine and Voltaire when dying; that these great men at the moment of death were terrified because they had given their honest opinions upon the subject of religion to their fellow-men. The imagination of the religious world has been taxed to the utmost in inventing absurd and infamous accounts of the last moments of these intellectual giants. Every Sunday-school paper, thousands of idiotic tracts, and countless stupidities called sermons have been filled with these calumnies.

Paine and Voltaire both believed in God,

both hoped for immortality, both believed in special Providence. But both denied the inspiration of the Scriptures, both denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. While theologians most cheerfully admit that most murderers die without fear, they deny the possibility of any man who has expressed his disbelief in the inspiration of the Bible dying except in an agony of terror. These stories are used in revivals and in Sunday schools, and have long been considered of great value.

I am anxious that these slanders shall cease. I am desirous of seeing justice done, even at this late day, to the dead.

For the purpose of ascertaining the evidence upon which these death-bed accounts really rest, I make to you the following proposition:—

*First.*—AS TO THOMAS PAINE: I will deposit with the First National Bank of Peoria, Illinois, one thousand dollars in gold, upon the following conditions: This money shall be subject to your order when you shall, in the manner hereinafter provided, substantiate that Thomas Paine admitted the Bible to be an inspired book, or that he recanted his infidel opinions, or that he died regretting that he had disbelieved the Bible, or that he died calling upon Jesus Christ in any religious sense whatever.

In order that a tribunal may be created to try this question, you may select one man, I will select another, and the two thus chosen shall select a third, and any two of the three may decide the matter.

As there will be certain costs and expenditures on both sides, such costs and expenditures shall be paid by the defeated party.

In addition to the one thousand dollars in gold, I will deposit a bond with good and sufficient security in the sum of two thousand dollars, conditioned for the payment of all costs in case I am defeated. I shall require of you a like bond.

From the date of accepting this offer you

may have ninety days to collect and present your testimony, giving me notice of time and place of taking depositions. I shall have a like time to take evidence upon my side, giving you like notice, and you shall then have thirty days to take further testimony in reply to what I may offer. The case shall then be argued before the persons chosen, and their decisions shall be final as to us.

If the arbitrator chosen by me shall die, I shall have the right to choose another. You shall have the same right. If the third one, chosen by our two, shall die, the two shall choose another; and all vacancies, from whatever cause, shall be filled upon the same principle.

The arbitrators shall sit when and where a majority shall determine, and shall have full power to pass upon all questions arising as to competency of evidence, and upon all subjects.

*Second.*—AS TO VOLTAIRE: I make the same proposition. If you will substantiate that Voltaire died expressing remorse, or showing in any way that he was in mental agony because he had attacked Catholicism, or because he had denied the inspiration of the Bible, or because he had denied the divinity of Christ.

I make these propositions because I want you to stop slandering the dead.

If the propositions do not suit you in any particular, please state your objections, and I will modify them in any way consistent with the object in view.

If Paine and Voltaire died filled with childish and silly fear, I want to know it, and I want the world to know it. On the other hand, if the believers in superstition have made and circulated these cruel slanders concerning the mighty dead, I want the world to know that.

As soon as you notify me of the acceptance of these propositions, I will send you the certificate of the bank that the money has been deposited upon the foregoing conditions, together with copies of bonds for costs.—Yours truly,

R. G. INGERSOLL.

In your paper of September 27th, 1877, you acknowledge the receipt of the foregoing letter, and, after giving an outline of its contents, say: "As not one of the affirmations, in the form stated in this letter, was contained in the offer we made, we have no occasion to substantiate them. But we are prepared to

produce the evidence of the truth of our own statement; and even to go further, to show not only that Tom Paine 'died a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death,' but that for many years previous, and up to that event, he lived a drunken and beastly life."

In order to refresh your memory as to what you had published, I call your attention to the following, which appeared in the *New York Observer*, July 19th, 1877:—

#### PUT DOWN THE MONEY.

Colonel Bob Ingersoll, in a speech full of ribaldry and blasphemy, made in San Francisco recently, said: "I will give \$1,000 in gold coin to any clergyman who can substantiate that the death of Voltaire was not as peaceful as the dawn; and of Tom Paine, whom they assert died in fear and agony, frightened by the clanking chains of devils—in fact, frightened to death by God. I will give \$1,000 likewise to any one who can substantiate this 'absurd story'—a story without a word of truth in it."

We have published the testimony, and the witnesses are on hand to prove that Tom Paine died a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death. *Let the Colonel deposit the money with any honest man, and the absurd story, as he terms it, shall be shown to be an over true tale. But he won't do it. His talk is infidel "buncombe," and nothing more.*

On August 31st I sent you my letter, and on September 27th you say in your paper: "As not one of the affirmations, in the form stated in this letter, was contained in the offer we made, we have no occasion to substantiate them."

What were the affirmations contained in the offer you made? I had offered a thousand dollars in gold to anyone who would substantiate "*the absurd story*" that Thomas Paine died in fear and agony, frightened by the clanking chains of devils—in fact, frightened to death by God.

In response to this offer, you said: "Let the Colonel deposit the money with an honest man, and the 'absurd story,' as he terms it, shall be shown to be an 'over true tale.' But he won't do



it. His talk is infidel 'buncombe' and nothing more."

Did you not offer to prove that Paine died in fear and agony, frightened by the clanking chains of devils? Did you not ask me to deposit the money, that you might prove the "absurd story" to be an "ower true tale" and obtain the money? Did you not in your paper of September 27th in effect deny that you had offered to prove this "absurd story"? As soon as I offered to deposit the gold and give bonds besides to cover costs, did you not publish a falsehood?

You have eaten your own words, and, for my part, I would rather have dined with Ezekiel than with you.

You have not met the issue. You have knowingly avoided it. The question was not as to the personal habits of Paine. The real question was, and is, whether Paine was filled with fear and horror at the time of his death on account of his religious opinions. That is the question. You avoid this. In effect, you abandon that charge and make others.

To you belongs the honour of having made the most cruel and infamous charges against Thomas Paine that have ever been made. Of what you have said you cannot prove the truth of one word.

You say that Thomas Paine died a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death.

I pronounce this charge to be a cowardly and beastly falsehood.

Have you any evidence that he was in a drunken condition when he died?

What did he say or do of a *cowardly* character just before, or at about the time of, his death?

In what way was his death cowardly? You must answer these questions, and give your proof, or all honest men will hold you in abhorrence. You have made these charges. The man against whom you make them is dead. He cannot answer you. I can. He cannot compel you to produce your testimony, or admit by your silence that you have cruelly slandered the defenceless dead. I can

and I will. You say that his death was cowardly. In what respect? Was it cowardly in him to hold the Thirty-nine Articles in contempt? Was it cowardly *not* to call on your Lord? Was it cowardly not to be afraid? You say that his death was beastly. Again I ask, in what respect? Was it beastly to submit to the inevitable with tranquillity? Was it beastly to look with composure upon the approach of death? Was it beastly to die without a complaint, without a murmur—to pass from life without a fear?

#### DID THOMAS PAINE RECANT?

Mr. Paine had prophesied that fanatics would crawl and cringe around him during his last moments. He believed that they would put a lie in the mouth of death.

When the shadow of the coming dissolution was upon him two clergymen, Messrs. Milledollar and Cunningham, called to annoy the dying man. Mr. Cunningham had the politeness to say: "You have now a full view of death; you cannot live long, and whosoever does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned." Mr. Paine replied: "Let me have none of your popish stuff. Get away with you. Good morning."

On another occasion a Methodist minister obtruded himself when Willet Hicks was present. This minister declared to Mr. Paine "that unless he repented of his unbelief he would be damned." Paine, although at the door of death, rose in his bed and indignantly requested the clergyman to leave his room. On another occasion two brothers by the name of Pigott sought to convert him. He was displeased, and requested their departure. Afterwards Thomas Nixon and Captain Daniel Pelton visited him for the express purpose of ascertaining whether he had, in any manner, changed his religious opinions. They were assured by the dying man that he still held the principles he had expressed in his writings.

Afterwards, these gentlemen, hearing that William Cobbett was about to write a life of Paine, sent him the following note :—

New York, April 24th, 1818.

SIR,—We have been informed that you have a design to write a history of the life and writings of Thomas Paine. If you have been furnished with materials in respect to his religious opinions, or rather of his recantation of his former opinions before his death, all you have heard of his recanting is false. Being aware that such reports would be raised after his death by fanatics who infested his house at the time it was expected he would die, we, the subscribers, intimate acquaintances of Thomas Paine since the year 1776, went to his house. He was sitting up in a chair, and apparently in full vigour and use of all his mental faculties. We interrogated him upon his religious opinions, and asked him if he had changed his mind, or repented of anything he had said or written on that subject. He answered, "Not at all," and appeared rather offended at our supposition that any change should take place in his mind. We took down in writing the questions put to him, and his answers thereto, before a number of persons then in his room, among whom were his doctor, Mrs. Bonneville, etc. This paper is mislaid, and cannot be found at present; but the above is the substance, which can be attested by many living witnesses.

THOMAS NIXON.  
DANIEL PELTON.

Mr. Jarvis, the artist, saw Mr. Paine one or two days before his death. To Mr. Jarvis he expressed his belief in his written opinions upon the subject of religion. B. F. Haskin, an attorney of the city of New York, also visited him, and inquired as to his religious opinions. Paine was then upon the threshold of death, but he did not tremble. He was not a coward. He expressed his firm and unshaken belief in the religious ideas he had given to the world.

Dr. Manley was with him when he spoke his last words. Dr. Manley asked the dying man if he did not wish to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and the dying philosopher answered: "I have no wish to believe on that subject." Amasa Woodsworth sat up with Thomas

Paine the night before his death. In 1839 Gilbert Vale, hearing that Mr. Woodsworth was living in or near Boston, visited him for the purpose of getting his statement. The statement was published in the *Beacon* of June 5th, 1839, while thousands who had been acquainted with Mr. Paine were living.

The following is the article referred to :—

We have just returned from Boston. One object of our visit to that city was to see a Mr. Amasa Woodsworth, an engineer, now retired in a handsome cottage and garden at East Cambridge, Boston. This gentleman owned the house occupied by Paine at his death, while he lived next door. As an act of kindness Mr. Woodsworth visited Mr. Paine every day for six weeks before his death. He frequently sat up with him, and did so on the last two nights of his life. He was always there with Dr. Manley, the physician, and assisted in removing Mr. Paine while his bed was prepared. He was present when Dr. Manley asked Mr. Paine "if he wished to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God," and he describes Mr. Paine's answer as animated. He says that, lying on his back, he used some action, and with much emphasis replied: "I have no wish to believe on that subject." He lived some time after this, but was not known to speak, for he died tranquilly. He accounts for the insinuating style of Dr. Manley's letter by stating that that gentleman just after its publication joined a church. He informs us that he has openly reproved the doctor for the falsity contained in the spirit of that letter, boldly declaring before Dr. Manley, who is yet living, that nothing which he saw justified the insinuations. Mr. Woodsworth assures us that he neither heard nor saw anything to justify the belief of any mental change in the opinions of Mr. Paine previous to his death; but that, being very ill and in pain, chiefly arising from the skin being removed in some parts by long lying, he was generally too uneasy to enjoy conversation on abstract subjects. This, then, is the best evidence that can be procured on this subject, and we publish it while the contravening parties are yet alive, and with the authority of Mr. Woodsworth.

GILBERT VALE.

A few weeks ago I received the following



letter, which confirms the statement of Mr. Vale :—

Near Stockton, Cal., Greenwood Cottage,  
July 9th, 1877.

COL. INGERSOLL,—In 1884 I talked with a gentleman in Boston. I have forgotten his name, but he was then an engineer of the Charlestown navy yard. I am thus particular so that you can find his name on the books. He told me that he nursed Thomas Paine in his last illness, and closed his eyes when dead. I asked him if he recanted and called upon God to save him. He replied: "No; he died as he had taught. He had a sore upon his side, and when we turned him it was very painful, and he would cry out, 'O, God!' or something like that." "But," said the narrator, "that was nothing, for he believed in a God." I told him that I had often heard it asserted from the pulpit that Mr. Paine had recanted in his last moments. The gentleman said that it was not true, and he appeared to be an intelligent, truthful man.—With respect, I remain, etc.,

PHILIP GRAVES, M. D.

The next witness is Willet Hicks, a Quaker preacher. He says that during the last illness of Mr. Paine he visited him almost daily, and that Paine died firmly convinced of the truth of the religious opinions he had given to his fellow-men. It was to this same Willet Hicks that Paine applied for permission to be buried in the cemetery of the Quakers. Permission was refused. This refusal settles the question of recantation. If he had recanted, of course there could have been no objection to his body being buried by the side of the best hypocrites on the earth.

If Paine recanted, why should he be denied "a little earth for charity"? Had he recanted, it would have been regarded as a vast and splendid triumph for the Gospel. It would with much noise and pomp and ostentation have been heralded about the world.

I received the following letter to-day. The writer is well known in this city, and is a man of high character :—

Peoria, October 8th, 1877.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, *Esteemed Friend*,  
—My parents were Friends (Quakers). My

father died when I was very young. The elderly and middle-aged Friends visited at my mother's house. We lived in the city of New York. Among the number I distinctly remember Elias Hicks, Willet Hicks, and a Mr. — Day, who was a bookseller in Pearl Street. There are many others whose names I do not now remember. The subject of the recantation by Thomas Paine of his views about the Bible in his last illness, or at any other time, was discussed by them in my presence at different times. I learned from them that some of them had attended upon Thomas Paine in his last sickness, and ministered to his wants up to the time of his death. And upon the question of whether he did recant there was but one expression. They all said that he did not recant in any manner. I often heard them say they wished he had recanted. In fact, according to them, the nearer he approached death the more positive he appeared to be in his convictions.

These conversations were from 1820 to 1822. I was at that time from ten to twelve years old; but these conversations impressed themselves upon me because many thoughtless people then blamed the Society of Friends for their kindness to that "arch infidel," Thomas Paine.

Truly yours, A. C. HANKINSON.

A few days ago I received the following letter :—

Albany, New York, Sept. 27th, 1877.

DEAR SIR,—It is over twenty years ago that professionally I made the acquaintance of John Hogeboom, a Justice of the Peace of the County of Rensselaer, New York. He was then over seventy years of age, and had the reputation of being a man of candour and integrity. He was a great admirer of Paine. He told me that he was personally acquainted with him, and used to see him frequently during the last years of his life in the city of New York, where Hogeboom then resided. I asked him if there was any truth in the charge that Paine was in the habit of getting drunk. He said that it was utterly false; that he never heard of such a thing during the lifetime of Mr. Paine, and did not believe anyone else did. I asked him about the recantation of his religious opinions on his death-bed, and the revolting death-bed scenes that the world has heard so much about. He said there was no truth in them; that he had received his information from persons who



attended Paine in his last illness, "and that he passed peacefully away, as we may say, in the sunshine of a great soul."

Yours truly,

W. J. HILTON.

The witnesses by whom I substantiate the fact that Thomas Paine did not recant, and that he died holding the religious opinions he had published, are :

*First:* Thomas Nixon, Captain Daniel Pelton, B. F. Haskin. These gentlemen visited him during his last illness for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had in any respect changed his views upon religion. He told them that he had not.

*Second:* James Cheetham. This man was the most malicious enemy Mr. Paine had, and yet he admits that "Thomas Paine died placidly, and almost without a struggle." (See *Life of Thomas Paine*, by James Cheetham.)

*Third:* The ministers Milledollar and Cunningham. These gentlemen told Mr. Paine that if he died without believing in the Lord Jesus Christ he would be damned, and Paine replied: "Let me have none of your popish stuff. Good morning." (See Sherwin's *Life of Paine*, p. 220.)

*Fourth:* Mrs. Hedden. She told these same preachers, when they attempted to obtrude themselves upon Mr. Paine again, that the attempt to convert Mr. Paine was useless; "that, if God did not change his mind, no human power could."

*Fifth:* Andrew A. Dean. This man lived upon Paine's farm at New Rochelle, and corresponded with him upon religious subjects. (See Paine's *Theological Works*, p. 308.)

*Sixth:* Mr. Jarvis, the artist, with whom Paine lived. He gives an account of an old lady coming to Paine and telling him that God Almighty had sent her to tell him that, unless he repented and believed in the Blessed Saviour, he would be damned. Paine replied that God would not send such a foolish old woman with such an impertinent message. (See Clio Rickman's *Life of Paine*.)

*Seventh:* William Carver, with whom Paine boarded. Mr. Carver said again and again that Paine did not recant. He knew him well, and had every opportunity of knowing. (See *Life of Paine* by Gilbert Vale.)

*Eighth:* Dr. Manley, who attended him in his last sickness, and to whom Paine spoke his last words. Dr. Manley asked him if he did not wish to believe in Jesus Christ, and he replied: "I have no wish to believe on that subject."

*Ninth:* Willet Hicks and Elias Hicks, who were with him frequently during his last sickness, and both of whom tried to persuade him to recant. According to their testimony, Mr. Paine died as he had lived—a believer in God and a friend of man. Willet Hicks was offered money to say something false against Thomas Paine. He was even offered money to remain silent and allow others to slander the dead. Mr. Hicks, speaking of Thomas Paine, said: "He was a good man—an honest man." (Vale's *Life of Paine*.)

*Tenth:* Amasa Woodsworth, who was with him every day for some six weeks immediately preceding his death, and sat up with him the last two nights of his life. This man declares that Paine did not recant, and that he died tranquilly. The evidence of Mr. Woodsworth is conclusive.

*Eleventh:* Thomas Paine himself. The will of Thomas Paine, written by himself, commences as follows:—"The last will and testament of me, the subscriber, Thomas Paine, reposing confidence in my creator God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other"; and closes in these words: "I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my creator God."

If Thomas Paine recanted, why do you pursue him? If he recanted, he died substantially in your belief; for what reason, then, do you denounce his death as cowardly? If upon his death-

bed he renounced the opinions he had published, the business of defaming him should be done by infidels, not by Christians.

I ask you if it is honest to throw away the testimony of his friends—the evidence of fair and honourable men—and take the putrid words of avowed and malignant enemies?

When Thomas Paine was dying he was infested by fanatics—by the snaky spies of bigotry. In the shadows of death were the unclean birds of prey waiting to tear with beak and claw the corpse of him who wrote the *Rights of Man*. And there, lurking and crouching in the darkness, were the jackals and hyenas of superstition ready to violate his grave.

These birds of prey, these unclean beasts, are the witnesses produced and relied upon by you.

One by one the instruments of torture have been wrenched from the cruel clutch of the Church, until within the armoury of orthodoxy there remains but one weapon—slander.

Against the witnesses that I have produced you can bring just two—Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale. The first is referred to in the memoir of Stephen Grellet. She had once been a servant in his house. Grellet tells what happened between this girl and Paine. According to this account, Paine asked her if she had ever read any of his writings; and, on being told that she had read very *little* of them, he inquired what she thought of them, adding that from such an one as she he expected a correct answer.

Let us examine this falsehood. Why would Paine expect a correct answer about his writings from one who had read very little of them? Does not such a statement devour itself? This young lady further said that the *Age of Reason* was put in her hands, and that the more she read of it the more dark and distressed she felt, and that she threw the book into the fire. Whereupon Mr. Paine remarked: "I wish all had done as you did, for, if the devil ever had any

agency in any work, he had it in my writing that book."

The next is Mary Hinsdale. She was a servant in the family of Willet Hicks. She, like Mary Roscoe, was sent to carry some delicacy to Mr. Paine. To this young lady Paine, according to her account, said precisely the same that he did to Mary Roscoe, and she said the same thing to Mr. Paine.

My own opinion is that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale are one and the same person, or the same story has been by mistake put in the mouth of both.

It is not possible that the same conversation should have taken place between Paine and Mary Roscoe and between him and Mary Hinsdale.

Mary Hinsdale lived with Willet Hicks, and he pronounced her story a pious fraud and fabrication. He said that Thomas Paine never said any such thing to Mary Hinsdale. (See Vale's *Life of Paine*.)

Another thing about this witness. A woman by the name of Mary Lockwood, a Hicksite Quaker, died. Mary Hinsdale met her brother about that time, and told him that his sister had recanted, and wanted her to say so at her funeral. This turned out to be false.

It has been claimed that Mary Hinsdale made her statement to Charles Collins. Long after the alleged occurrence Gilbert Vale, one of the biographers of Paine, had a conversation with Collins concerning Mary Hinsdale. Vale asked him what he thought of her. He replied that some of the Friends believed that she used opiates, and that they did not give credit to her statements. He also said that he believed what the Friends said, but thought that when a young woman she *might* have told the truth.

In 1818 William Cobbett came to New York. He began collecting materials for a life of Thomas Paine. In this he became acquainted with Mary Hinsdale and Charles Collins. Mr. Cobbett gave a full account of what happened in a letter addressed to the Norwich



*Mercury* in 1819. From this account it seems that Charles Collins told Cobbett that Paine had recanted. Cobbett called for the testimony, and told Mr. Collins that he must give time, place, and the circumstances. He finally brought a statement that he stated had been made by Mary Hinsdale. Armed with this document, Cobbett, in October of that year, called upon the said Mary Hinsdale at No. 10, Anthony Street, New York, and showed her the statement. Upon being questioned by Mr. Cobbett she said "that it was so long ago that she could not speak positively to any part of the matter, that she would not say that any part of the paper was true, that she had never seen the paper, and that she had never given Charles Collins authority to say anything about the matter in her name." And so, in the month of October, in the year of grace 1818, in the mist and fog of forgetfulness, disappeared for ever one Mary Hinsdale—the last and only witness against the intellectual honesty of Thomas Paine.

DID THOMAS PAINE LIVE THE LIFE OF  
A DRUNKEN BEAST, AND DID HE DIE A  
DRUNKEN, COWARDLY, AND BEASTLY  
DEATH?

Upon you rests the burden of substantiating these infamous charges.

You have, I suppose, produced the best evidence in your possession, and that evidence I will now proceed to examine. Your first witness is Grant Thorburn. He makes three charges against Thomas Paine. First, that his wife obtained a divorce from him in England for cruelty and neglect. Second, that he was a defaulter, and fled from England to America. Third, that he was a drunkard.

These three charges stand upon the same evidence—the word of Grant Thorburn. If they are not all true, Mr. Thorburn stands impeached.

The charge that Mrs. Paine obtained a divorce on account of the cruelty and neglect of her husband is utterly false. There is no such record in the world,

and never was. Paine and his wife separated by mutual consent. Each respected the other. They remained friends. This charge is without any foundation in fact. I challenge the Christian world to produce the record of this decree of divorce. According to Mr. Thorburn, it was granted in England. In that country public records are kept of all such decrees. Have the kindness to produce this decree showing that it was given on account of cruelty, or admit that Mr. Thorburn was mistaken.

Thomas Paine was a just man. Although separated from his wife, he always spoke of her with tenderness and respect, and frequently sent her money without letting her know the source whence it came. Was this the conduct of a drunken beast?

The second charge, that Paine was a defaulter in England and fled to America, is equally false. He did not flee from England. He came to America, not as a fugitive, but as a free man. He came with a letter of introduction signed by another infidel, Benjamin Franklin. He came as a soldier of freedom—an apostle of liberty.

In this second charge there is not one word of truth.

He held a small office in England. If he was a defaulter, the records of that country will show that fact.

Mr. Thorburn, unless the record can be produced to substantiate him, stands convicted of at least two mistakes.

Now as to the third. He says that in 1802 Paine was an "old remnant of mortality, drunk, bloated, and half asleep."

Can any one believe this to be a true account of the personal appearance of Mr. Paine in 1802? He had just returned from France. He had been welcomed home by Thomas Jefferson, who had said that he was entitled to the hospitality of every American.

In 1802 Mr. Paine was honoured with a public dinner in the city of New York. He was called upon and treated with kindness and respect by such men as De Witt Clinton,



In 1806 Mr. Paine wrote a letter to Andrew A. Dean upon the subject of religion. Read that letter, and then say that the writer of it was an "old remnant of mortality, drunk, bloated, and half-asleep." Search the files of the *New York Observer* from the first issue to the last, and you will find nothing superior to this letter.

In 1803 Mr. Paine wrote a letter of considerable length, and of great force, to his friend Samuel Adams. Such letters are not written by drunken beasts, nor by remnants of old mortality, nor by drunkards. It was about the same time that he wrote his *Remarks on Robert Hall's Sermons*.

These *Remarks* were not written by a drunken beast, but by a clear-headed and thoughtful man.

In 1804 he published an essay on the invasion of England, and a treatise on gun-boats full of valuable maritime information; in 1805, a treatise on yellow fever, suggesting modes of prevention. In short, he was an industrious and thoughtful man. He sympathised with the poor and oppressed of all lands. He looked upon monarchy as a species of physical slavery. He had the goodness to attack that form of government. He regarded the religion of his day as a kind of mental slavery. He had the courage to give his reasons for his opinion. His reasons filled the Churches with hatred. Instead of answering his arguments, they attacked him. Men who were not fit to blacken his shoes blackened his character.

There is too much religious cant in the statement of Mr. Thorburn. He exhibited too much anxiety to tell what Grant Thorburn said to Thomas Paine. He names Thomas Jefferson as one of the disreputable men who welcomed Paine with open arms. The testimony of a man who regarded Thomas Jefferson as a disreputable person, as to the character of anybody, is utterly without value. In my judgment, the testimony of Mr. Thorburn should be thrown aside as wholly unworthy of belief.

Your next witness is the Rev. J. D.

Wickham, D.D., who tells what an elder in his church said. This elder said that Paine passed his last days on his farm at New Rochelle with a solitary female attendant. This is not true. He did not pass his last days at New Rochelle. Consequently this pious elder did not see him during his last days at that place. Upon this elder we prove an alibi. Mr. Paine passed his last days in the city of New York, in a house upon Columbia Street. The story of the Rev. J. D. Wickham, D.D., is simply false.

The next competent false witness is the Rev. Charles Hawley, D.D., who proceeds to state that the story of the Rev. J. D. Wickham, D.D., is corroborated by older citizens of New Rochelle. The names of these ancient residents are withheld. According to these unknown witnesses, the account given by the deceased elder was entirely correct. But as the particulars of Mr. Paine's conduct "were too loathsome to be described in print," we are left entirely in the dark as to what he really did.

While at New Rochelle Mr. Paine lived with Mr. Purdy, with Mr. Dean, with Captain Pelton, and with Mr. Staple. It is worthy of note that all of these gentlemen give the lie direct to the statements of "older residents" and ancient citizens spoken of by the Rev. Charles Hawley, D.D., and leave him with his "loathsome particulars" existing only in his own mind.

The next gentleman you bring upon the stand is W. H. Ladd, who quotes from the memoirs of Stephen Grellet. This gentleman also has the misfortune to be dead. According to his account, Mr. Paine made his recantation to a servant girl of his by the name of Mary Roscoe. To this girl, according to the account, Mr. Paine uttered the wish that all who read his book had burned it. I believe there is a mistake in the name of this girl. Her name was probably Mary Hinsdale, as it was once claimed that Paine made the same remark to her; but this point I shall notice hereafter. These are your witnesses, and

the only ones you bring forward, to support your charge that Thomas Paine lived a drunken and beastly life, and died a drunken, cowardly, and beastly death. All these calumnies are found in a life of Paine by a Mr. Cheetham, the convicted libeller already referred to. Mr. Cheetham was an enemy of the man whose life he pretended to write.

In order to show you the estimation in which Mr. Cheetham was held by Mr. Paine, I will give you a copy of a letter that throws light upon this point :—

October 28th, 1807.

MR. CHEETHAM,—Unless you make a public apology for the abuse and falsehood in your paper of Tuesday, October 27th, respecting me, I will prosecute you for lying.

THOMAS PAINE.

In another letter, speaking of this same man, Mr. Paine says: "If an unprincipled bully cannot be reformed, he can be punished." "Cheetham has been so long in the habit of giving false information that truth is to him like a foreign language."

Mr. Cheetham wrote the life of Paine to gratify his malice and to support religion. He was prosecuted for libel, was convicted and fined.

Yet the life of Paine written by this man is referred to by the Christian world as the highest authority.

As to the personal habits of Mr. Paine, we have the testimony of William Carver, with whom he lived; of Mr. Jarvis, the artist, with whom he lived; of Mr. Staple, with whom he lived; of Mr. Purdy, who was a tenant of Paine's; of Mr. Burger, with whom he was intimate; of Thomas Nixon and Captain Daniel Pelton, both of whom knew him well; of Amasa Woodsworth, who was with him when he died; of John Fellows, who boarded at the same house; of James Wilburn, with whom he boarded; of B. F. Haskin, a lawyer, who was well acquainted with him, and called upon him during his last illness; of Walter Morton, a friend; of Clio Rickman, who had known him for many years; of Willet and Elias Hicks, Quakers, who

knew him intimately and well; of Judge Herttell, H. Margary, Elihu Palmer, and many others. All these testified to the fact that Mr. Paine was a temperate man. In those days nearly everybody used spirituous liquors. Paine was not an exception; but he did not drink to excess. Mr. Lovett, who kept the City Hotel, where Paine stopped, in a note to Caleb Bingham declared that Paine drank less than any boarder he had.

Against all this evidence you produce the story of Grant Thorburn—the story of the Rev. J. D. Wickham that an elder in his church told him that Paine was a drunkard, corroborated by the Rev. Charles Hawley, and an extract from Lossing's history to the same effect. The evidence is overwhelmingly against you. Will you have the fairness to admit it? Your witnesses are merely the repeaters of the falsehoods of James Cheetham, the convicted libeller.

After all, drinking is not as bad as lying. An honest drunkard is better than a calumniator of the dead. "A remnant of old mortality, drunk, bloated, and half asleep" is better than a perfectly sober defender of human slavery.

To become drunk is a virtue compared with stealing a babe from the breast of its mother.

Drunkenness is one of the beatitudes, compared with editing a religious paper devoted to the defence of slavery upon the ground that it is a divine institution.

Do you really think that Paine was a drunken beast when he wrote *Common Sense*—a pamphlet that aroused three millions of people as people were never aroused by a pamphlet before? Was he a drunken beast when he wrote the *Crisis*? Was it to a drunken beast that the following letter was addressed?—

Rocky Hill, September 10th, 1783.

I have learned since I have been at this place that you are at Bordentown—whether for the sake of retirement or economy I know not. Be it for either or both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place and partake with me I shall be exceedingly happy to see you at it. Your presence may remind Congress of



your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who with much pleasure subscribes himself

Your sincere friend,  
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Did any of your ancestors ever receive a letter like that?

Do you think that Paine was a drunken beast when the following letter was received by him?—

You express a wish in your letter to return to America in a national ship. Mr. Dawson, who brings over the treaty, and who will present you with this letter, is charged with orders to the captain of the *Maryland* to receive and accommodate you back, if you can be ready to depart at such a short warning. You will in general find us returned to sentiments worthy of former times; *in these it will be your glory to have steadily laboured, and with as much effect as any man living.* That you may live long to continue your useful labours, and reap the reward in the *thankfulness of nations*, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurances of my high esteem and affectionate attachment.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Did any of your ancestors ever receive a letter like that?

It is not necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen—I speak of the great mass of the people—are interested in your welfare. They have not forgotten the history of their own revolution and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained—and I trust never will stain—our national character. You are considered by them as not only having rendered important services in our own revolution, but as being on a more extensive scale the friend of human rights, and a distinguished and able defender of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.

JAMES MUNRO.

Did any of your ancestors ever receive a letter like that?

No writer has exceeded Paine in ease and familiarity of style, in perspicuity of expression, happiness of elucidation, and in simple and unassuming language.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Was ever a letter like that written about an editor of the *New York Observer*?

Was it in consideration of the services of a drunken beast that the legislature of Pennsylvania presented Thomas Paine with five hundred pounds sterling?

Did the State of New York feel indebted to a drunken beast, and confer upon Thomas Paine an estate of several hundred acres?

"I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy."

"My own mind is my own church."

"It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself."

"Any system of religion that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

"The Word of God is the creation which we behold."

"The age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system."

"It is with a pious fraud as with a bad action—it begets a calamitous necessity of going on."

"To read the Bible without horror we must undo everything that is tender, sympathising, and benevolent in the heart of man."

"The man does not exist who can say I have persecuted him, or that I have in any case returned evil for evil."

"Of all tyrannies that afflict mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst."

"My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good and endeavouring to make their fellow-mortals happy will be happy hereafter."

"The belief in a cruel god makes a cruel man."

"The intellectual part of religion is a



private affair between every man and his Maker, and in which no third party has any right to interfere. The practical part consists in our doing good to each other."

"No man ought to make a living by religion. One person cannot act religion for another—every person must perform it for himself."

"One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests."

"Let us propagate morality unfettered by superstition."

"God is the power, or first cause; Nature is the law, and matter is the subject acted upon."

"I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life."

"The key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to it to be obstructed by any."

"My religion, and the whole of it, is the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy."

"I have yet, I believe, some years in store, for I have a good state of health and a happy mind. I take care of both, by nourishing the first with *temperance* and the latter with abundance."

"He lives immured within the Bastile of a word."

How perfectly that sentence describes you! The Bastile in which you are immured is the word "Calvinism."

"Man has no property in man."

What a splendid motto that would have made for the *New York Observer* in the olden time!

"The world is my country; to do good my religion."

I ask you again whether these splendid utterances came from the lips of a drunken beast?

DID THOMAS PAINE DIE IN DESTITUTION AND WANT?

The charge has been made over and over again that Thomas Paine died in want and destitution, that he was an abandoned pauper—an outcast without

friends and without money. This charge is just as false as the rest.

Upon his return to this country in 1802 he was worth \$30,000, according to his own statement made at that time in the following letter addressed to Clio Rickman:—

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Mr. Monroe, who is appointed Minister Extraordinary to France, takes charge of this, to be delivered to Mr. Este, banker in Paris, to be forwarded to you.

I arrived at Baltimore October 30th, and you can have no idea of the agitation which my arrival occasioned. From New Hampshire to Georgia (an extent of 1,500 miles) every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse.

My property in this country has been taken care of by my friends, and is now worth £6,000 sterling, which, put in the funds, will bring me £400 sterling a year.

Remember me in affection and friendship to your wife and family, and in the circle of your friends.

THOMAS PAINE.

A man in those days worth thirty thousand dollars was not a pauper. That amount would bring an income of at least two thousand dollars per annum. Two thousand dollars then would be fully equal to five thousand dollars now.

On July 12th, 1809, the year in which he died, Mr. Paine made his will. From this instrument we learn that he was the owner of a valuable farm within twenty miles of New York. He also was the owner of thirty shares in the New York Phoenix Insurance Company, worth upwards of fifteen hundred dollars. Besides this, some personal property and ready money. By his will he gave to Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmett, brother of Robert Emmett, two hundred dollars each, and one hundred to the widow of Elihu Palmer.

Is it possible that this will was made by a pauper, by a destitute outcast, by a man who suffered for the ordinary necessities of life?

But suppose, for the sake of the argument, that he was poor, and that he died a beggar, does that tend to show that the Bible is an inspired book, and that

Calvin did not burn Servetus? Do you really regard poverty as a crime? If Paine had died a millionaire, would you have accepted his religious opinions? If Paine had drank nothing but cold water, would you have repudiated the five cardinal points of Calvinism? Does an argument depend for its force upon the pecuniary condition of the person making it? As a matter of fact, most reformers, most men and women of genius, have been acquainted with poverty. Beneath a covering of rags have been found some of the tenderest and bravest hearts.

Owing to the attitude of the Churches for the last fifteen hundred years, truth-telling has not been a very lucrative business. As a rule, hypocrisy has worn the robes and honesty the rags. That day is passing away. You cannot now answer the arguments of a man by pointing at holes in his coat. Thomas Paine attacked the Church when it was powerful, when it had what were called honours to bestow, when it was the keeper of the public conscience, when it was strong and cruel. The Church waited till he was dead, then attacked his reputation and his clothes.

Once upon a time a donkey kicked a lion. The lion was dead.

#### CONCLUSION.

From the persistence with which the orthodox have charged for the last sixty-eight years that Thomas Paine recanted, and that when dying he was filled with remorse and fear—from the malignity of the attacks upon his personal character, I had concluded that there must be some evidence of some kind to support these charges. Even with my ideas of the average honour of believers in superstition—the disciples of fear—I did not quite believe that all these infamies rested solely upon poorly attested lies. I had charity enough to suppose that something had been said or done by Thomas Paine capable of being tortured into a foundation for these calumnies. And I was foolish enough to think that even you would be willing to fairly

examine the pretended evidence said to sustain these charges, and give your honest conclusion to the world. I supposed that you, being acquainted with the history of your country, felt under a certain obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid services rendered by him in the darkest days of the Revolution. It was only reasonable to suppose that you were aware that in the midnight of Valley Forge the *Crisis*, by Thomas Paine, was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair. I took it for granted that you knew of the bold stand taken and the brave words spoken by Thomas Paine in the French Convention against the death of the king. I thought it probable that you, being an editor, had read the *Rights of Man*; that you knew that Thomas Paine was a champion of human liberty; that he was one of the founders and fathers of this Republic; that he was one of the foremost men of his age; that he had never written a word in favour of injustice; that he was a despiser of slavery; that he abhorred tyranny in all its forms; that he was in the widest and highest sense a friend of his race; that his head was as clear as his heart was good, and that he had the courage to speak his honest thought. Under these circumstances I had hoped that you would for the moment forget your religious prejudices and submit to the enlightened judgment of the world the evidence you had, or could obtain, affecting in any way the character of so great and so generous a man. This you have refused to do. In my judgment, you have mistaken the temper of even your own readers. A large majority of the religious people of this country have, to a considerable extent, outgrown the prejudices of their fathers. They are willing to know the truth, and the whole truth, about the life and death of Thomas Paine. They will not thank you for having presented them the moss-covered, the maimed and distorted traditions of ignorance, prejudice, and credulity. By this course you will convince them not

of the wickedness of Paine, but of your own unfairness.

What crime had Thomas Paine committed that he should have feared to die? The only answer you can give is that he denied the inspiration of the Scriptures. If this is a crime, the civilised world is filled with criminals. The pioneers of human thought—the intellectual leaders of the world, the foremost men in every science, the kings of literature and art, those who stand in the front rank of investigation, the men who are civilising, elevating, instructing, and refining mankind, are to-day unbelievers in the dogma of inspiration. Upon this question the intellect of Christendom agrees with the conclusions reached by the genius of Thomas Paine. Centuries ago a noise was made for the purpose of frightening mankind. Orthodoxy is the echo of that noise.

The man who now regards the Old Testament as in any sense a sacred or inspired book is, in my judgment, an intellectual and moral deformity. There is in it so much that is cruel, ignorant, and ferocious that it is to me a matter of amazement that it was ever thought to be the work of a most merciful deity.

Upon the question of inspiration Thomas Paine gave his honest opinion. Can it be that to give an honest opinion causes one to die in terror and despair? Have you in your writings been actuated by the fear of such a consequence? Why should it be taken for granted that Thomas Paine, who devoted his life to the sacred cause of freedom, should have been hissed at in the hour of death by the snakes of conscience, while editors of Presbyterian papers who defended slavery as a divine institution, and cheerfully justified the stealing of babes from the breasts of mothers, are supposed to have

passed smilingly from earth to the embraces of angels? Why should you think that the heroic author of the *Rights of Man* should shudderingly dread to leave this "bank and shoal of time," while Calvin, dripping with the blood of Servetus, was anxious to be judged of God? Is it possible that the persecutors, the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the inventors and users of thumbscrews and iron boots and racks, the burners and tearers of human flesh, the stealers, whippers, and enslavers of men, the buyers and beaters of babes and mothers, the founders of inquisitions, the makers of chains, the builders of dungeons, the slanderers of the living and the calumniators of the dead, all died in the odour of sanctity, with white, forgiven hands folded upon the breasts of peace; while the destroyers of prejudice, the apostles of humanity, the soldiers of liberty, the breakers of fetters, the creators of light, died surrounded with the fierce fiends of fear?

In your attempt to destroy the character of Thomas Paine you have failed, and have succeeded only in leaving a stain upon your own. You have written words as cruel, bitter, and heartless as the creed of Calvin. Hereafter you will stand in the pillory of history as a defamer—a calumniator of the dead. You will be known as the man who said that Thomas Paine, the "Author Hero," lived a drunken, cowardly, and beastly life, and died a drunken and beastly death. These infamous words will be branded upon the forehead of your reputation. They will be remembered against you when all else you may have uttered shall have passed from the memory of men.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.



THE "OBSERVER'S" SECOND ATTACK<sup>1</sup>

## TOM PAINE AGAIN.

IN the *Observer* of September 27th, in response to numerous calls from different parts of the country for information, and in fulfilment of a promise, we presented a mass of testimony, chiefly from persons with whom we had been personally acquainted, establishing the truth of our assertions in regard to the dissolute life and miserable end of Paine. It was not a pleasing subject for discussion, and an apology, or at least an explanation, is due to our readers for resuming it, and for occupying so much space, or any space, in exhibiting the truth and the proofs in regard to the character of a man who had become so debased by his intemperance, and so vile in his habits, as to be excluded, for many years before and up to the time of his death, from all decent society.

Our reasons for taking up the subject at all, and for presenting at this time so much additional testimony in regard to the facts of the case, are these: At different periods for the last fifty years efforts have been made by infidels to revive and honour the memory of one whose friends would honour him most by suffering his name to sink into oblivion, if that were possible. About two years since Rev. O. B. Frothingham, of this city, came to their aid, and undertook a sort of championship of Paine, making in a public discourse this statement: "No private character has been more foully calumniated in the name of God than that of Thomas Paine." (Mr. Frothingham, it will be remembered, is the one who recently, in a public discourse, announced the downfall of Christianity, although he very kindly made the allowance that "it may be a thousand years before its decay will be visible to all eyes." It is our private

opinion that it will be at least a thousand and one.) Rev. John W. Chadwick, a minister of the same order of unbelief, who signs himself "Minister of the Second Unitarian Society in Brooklyn," has devoted two discourses to the same end, eulogising Paine. In one of these, which we have before us in a handsomely printed pamphlet, entitled "Method and Value of his (Paine's) Religious Teachings," he says: "Christian usage has determined that an infidel means one who does not believe in Christianity as a supernatural religion; in the Bible as a supernatural book; in Jesus as a supernatural person. And in this sense Paine was an infidel, and so, thank God, am I." It is proper to add that Unitarians generally decline all responsibility for the utterances of both of these men, and that they compose a denomination, or rather two denominations, of their own.

There is also a certain class of infidels who are not quite prepared to meet the odium that attaches to the name. They call themselves Christians, but their sympathies are all with the enemies of Christianity, and they are not always able to conceal it. They have not the courage of their opinions, like Mr. Frothingham and Mr. Chadwick, and they work only sideways towards the same end. We have been no little amused, since our last article on this subject appeared, to read some of the articles that have been written on the other side, though professedly on no side, and to observe how sincerely these men deprecate the discussion of the character of Paine as an unprofitable topic. It never appeared to them unprofitable when the discussion was on the other side.

Then, too, we have for months past been receiving letters from different

<sup>1</sup> From the *New York Observer* of November 1st, 1877.

parts of the country asking authentic information on the subject, and stating that the followers of Paine are making extraordinary efforts to circulate his writings against the Christian religion; and in order to give currency to these writings they are endeavouring to rescue his name from the disgrace into which it sank during the latter years of his life. Paine spent several of his last years in furnishing a commentary upon his infidel principles. This commentary was contained in his besotted, degraded life and miserable end; but his friends do not wish the commentary to go out in connection with his writings. They prefer to have them read without the comments by their author. Hence this anxiety to free the great apostle of infidelity from the obloquy which his life brought upon his name; to represent him as a pure, noble, virtuous man, and to make it appear that he died a peaceful, happy death, just like a philosopher.

But what makes the publication of the facts in the case still more imperative at this time is the wholesale accusation brought against the Christian public by the friends and admirers of Paine. Christian ministers as a class and Christian journals are expressly accused of falsifying history, of defaming "the mighty dead!" (meaning Paine), etc., etc. In the face of all these accusations it cannot be out of place to state the facts, and to fortify the statement by satisfactory evidence, as we are abundantly able to do.

The two points on which we propose to produce the testimony are the character of Paine's life (referring, of course, to his last residence in this country, for no one has intimated that he had sunk into such besotted drunkenness until about the time of his return to the United States in 1802), and the real character of his death as consistent with such a life, and as marked further by the cowardliness which has been often exhibited by infidels in the same circumstances.

It is nothing at all to the purpose to show, as his friends are fond of doing,

that Paine rendered important service to the cause of American Independence. This is not the point under discussion, and is not denied. No one ever called in question the valuable service that Benedict Arnold rendered to the country in the early part of the Revolutionary War. But this, with true Americans, does not suffice to cast a shade of loveliness, or even to spread a mantle of charity, over his subsequent career. Whatever share Paine had in the personal friendship of the fathers of the Revolution he forfeited by his subsequent life of beastly drunkenness and degradation, and on this account, as well as on account of his blasphemy, he was shunned by all decent people.

We wish to make one or two corrections of mis-statements by Paine's advocates, on which a vast amount of argument has been simply wasted. We have never stated in any form, nor have we ever supposed, that Paine actually renounced his infidelity. The accounts agree in stating that he died a blaspheming infidel, and his horrible death we regard as one of the fruits, the fitting complement, of his infidelity. We have never seen anything that encouraged the hope that he was not abandoned of God in his last hours. But we have no doubt, on the other hand, that having become a wreck in body and mind through his intemperance, abandoned of God, deserted by his infidel companions, and dependent upon Christian charity for the attentions he received, miserable beyond description in his condition, and seeing nothing to hope for in the future, he was afraid to die, and was ready to call upon God and upon Christ for mercy, and ready perhaps in the next minute to blaspheme. This is what we referred to in speaking of Paine's death as cowardly. It is shown in the testimony we have produced, and still more fully in that which we now present. The most wicked men are ready to call upon God in seasons of great peril, and sometimes ask for Christian ministrations when in extreme illness; but they are often ready on any



alleviation of distress to turn to their wickedness again, in the expressive language of Scripture, "as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

We have never stated or intimated, nor, so far as we are aware, has any one of our correspondents stated, that Paine died in poverty. It has been frequently and truthfully stated that Paine was dependent on Christian charity for the attentions he received in his last days, and so he was. His infidel companions forsook him, and Christian hearts and hands ministered to his wants, notwithstanding the blasphemies of his death-bed.

Nor has one of our correspondents stated, as alleged, that Paine died at New Rochelle. The Rev. Dr. Wickham, who was a resident of that place nearly fifty years ago, and who was perfectly familiar with the facts of his life, wrote that Paine spent "his latter days" on the farm presented to him by the State of New York, which was strictly true, but made no reference to it as the place of his death.

Such misrepresentations serve to show how much the advocates of Paine admire "truth."

With these explanations we produce further evidence in regard to the manner of Paine's life and the character of his death, both of which we have already characterised in appropriate terms, as the following testimony will show.

In regard to Paine's "personal habits," even before his return to this country, and particularly his aversion to soap and water, Elkana Watson, a gentleman of the highest social position, who resided in France during a part of the Revolutionary War, and who was the personal friend of Washington, Franklin, and other patriots of the period, makes some incidental statements in his *Men and Times of the Revolution*. Though eulogising Paine's efforts in behalf of American Independence, he describes him as "coarse and uncouth in his manners, loathsome in his appearance, and a dis-

gusting egotist." On Paine's arrival at Nantes the Mayor and other distinguished citizens called upon him to pay their respects to the American patriot. Mr. Watson says: "He was soon rid of his respectable visitors, who left the room with marks of astonishment and disgust." Mr. Watson, after much entreaty, and only by promising him a bundle of newspapers to read while undergoing the operation, succeeded in prevailing on Paine to "stew, for an hour, in a hot bath." Mr. Watson accompanied Paine to the bath, and "instructed the keeper in French (which Paine did not understand) gradually to increase the heat of the water until "*le Monsieur serait bien bouilli*" (until the gentleman shall be well boiled); and adds that "he became so much absorbed in his reading that he was nearly par-boiled before leaving the bath, much to his improvement and my satisfaction."

William Carver has been cited as a witness in behalf of Paine, and particularly as to his "personal habits." In a letter to Paine, dated December 2nd, 1776, he bears the following testimony:—

A respectable gentleman from New Rochelle called to see me a few days back, and said that everybody was tired of you there, and no one would undertake to board and lodge you. I thought this was the case, as I found you at a tavern in a most miserable situation. You appeared as if you had not been shaved for a fortnight, and, as to a shirt, it could not be said that you had one on. It was only the remains of one, and this, likewise, appeared not to have been off your back for a fortnight, and was nearly the colour of tanned leather; and you had the most disagreeable smell possible, just like that of our poor beggars in England. Do you remember the pains I took to clean you—that I got a tub of warm water and soap and washed you from head to foot, and this I had to do three times before I could get you clean? (And then follow more disgusting details.)

You say, also, that you found your own liquors during the time you boarded with me; but you should have said, "I found only a small part of the liquor I drank during my stay with you; this part I purchased of John Fellows, which was a



demijohn of brandy containing four gallons, and this did not serve me three weeks." This can be proved, and I mean not to say anything that I cannot prove ; for I hold truth as a precious jewel. It is a well-known fact that you drank one quart of brandy per day, at my expense, during the different times that you have boarded with me, the demijohn above mentioned excepted, and the last fourteen weeks you were sick. Is not this a supply of liquor for dinner and supper?"

This chosen witness in behalf of Paine closes his letter, which is full of loathsome descriptions of Paine's manner of life, as follows :—

Now, sir, I think I have drawn a complete portrait of your character ; yet to enter upon every minutiae would be to give a history of your life, and to develop the fallacious mask of hypocrisy and deception under which you have acted in your political as well as moral capacity of life.

(Signed) WILLIAM CARVER.

Carver had the same opinion of Paine to his dying day. When an old man, and an infidel of the Paine type and habits, he was visited by the Rev. E. F. Hatfield, D.D., of this city, who writes to us of his interview with Carver, under date of September 27th, 1877 :—

I conversed with him nearly an hour. I took special pains to learn from him all that I could about Paine, whose landlord he had been for eighteen months. He spoke of him as a base and shameless drunkard, utterly destitute of moral principle. His denunciations of the man were perfectly fearful, and fully confirmed, in my apprehension, all that had been written of Paine's immorality and repulsiveness.

Cheetham's *Life of Paine*, which was published the year that he died, and which has passed through several editions (we have three of them now before us), describes a man lost to all moral sensibility and to all sense of decency, a habitual drunkard, and it is simply incredible that a book should have appeared so soon after the death of its subject, and should have been so frequently republished, without being at once refuted, if the testimony were not substantially true.

Many years later, when it was found necessary to bolster up the reputation of Paine, Cheetham's *Memoirs* were called a pack of lies. If only one-tenth part of what he publishes circumstantially in his volume as facts in regard to Paine were true, all that has been written against him in later years does not begin to set forth the degraded character of the man's life. And, with all that has been written on the subject, we see no good reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of Cheetham's portrait of the man whom he knew so well.

Dr. J. W. Francis, well known as an eminent physician of this city, in his *Reminiscences of New York*, says of Paine :—

He who in his early days had been associated with, and had received counsel from, Franklin was in his old age deserted by the humblest menial ; he whose pen has proved a very sword among nations, had shaken empires, and made kings tremble, now yielded up the mastery to the most treacherous of tyrants—King Alcohol.

The physician who attended Paine during his last illness was Dr. James R. Manley, a gentleman of the highest character. A letter of his, written in October of the year that Paine died, fully corroborates the account of his state as recorded by Stephen Grellet in his *Memoirs*, which we have already printed. He writes :—

New York, October 2nd, 1809.

I was called upon by accident to visit Mr. Paine on February 25th last, and found him indisposed with fever, and very apprehensive of an attack of apoplexy, as he stated that he had that disease before, and at this time felt a great degree of vertigo, and was unable to help himself as he had hitherto done, on account of an intense pain above the eyes. On inquiry of the attendants I was told that three or four days previously he had concluded to dispense with his usual quantity of accustomed stimulus, and that he had on that day resumed it. To the want of his usual drink they attributed his illness, and it is highly probable that the usual quantity operating upon a state of system more excited from the above privations was the

cause of the symptoms of which he then complained.....And here let me be permitted to observe (lest blame might attach to those whose business it was to pay any particular attention to his cleanliness of person) that it was absolutely impossible to effect that purpose. Cleanliness appeared to make no part of his comfort; he seemed to have a singular aversion to soap and water; he would never ask to be washed, and when he was he would always make objections; and it was not unusual to wash and to dress him clean very much against his inclinations. In this deplorable state, with confirmed dropsy, attended with frequent cough, vomiting, and hiccough, he continued growing from bad to worse till the morning of June 8th, when he died. Though I may remark that during the last three weeks of his life his situation was such that his decease was confidently expected every day, his ulcers having assumed a gangrenous appearance, being excessively fetid, and discoloured blisters having taken place on the soles of his feet without any ostensible cause, which baffled the usual attempts to arrest their progress; and when we consider his former habits, his advanced age, the feebleness of his constitution, his constant habit of using ardent spirits *ad libitum* till the commencement of his last illness, so far from wondering that he died so soon, we are constrained to ask, How did he live so long? Concerning his conduct during his disease I have not much to remark, though the little I have may be somewhat interesting. Mr. Paine professed to be above the fear of death, and a great part of his conversation was principally directed to give the impression that he was perfectly willing to leave this world, and yet some parts of his conduct were with difficulty reconcilable with his belief. In the first stages of his illness he was satisfied to be left alone during the day, but he required some person to be with him at night, urging as his reason that he was afraid that he should die when unattended, and at this period his deportment and his principle seemed to be consistent; so much so that a stranger would judge from some of the remarks he would make that he was an infidel. I recollect being with him at night, watching. He was very apprehensive of a speedy dissolution, and suffered great distress of body, and perhaps of mind (for he was waiting the event of an application to the Society of Friends for permission that his corpse might be deposited in their grave-ground, and had reason to believe

that the request might be refused), when he remarked in these words: "I think I can say what *they* made Jesus Christ to say—'My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?'" He went on to observe on the want of that respect which he conceived he merited, when I observed to him that I thought his corpse should be matter of least concern to him; that those whom he would leave behind him would see that he was properly interred; and, further, that it would be of little consequence to *me* where I was deposited provided I was buried. Upon which he answered that he had nothing else to talk about, and that he would as lief talk of his death as of anything, but that he was not so indifferent about his corpse as I appeared to be.

During the latter part of his life, though his conversation was equivocal, his conduct was singular. He could not be left alone night or day; he not only required to have some person with him, but he must see that he or she was there, and would not allow his curtain to be closed at any time; and if, as it would sometimes unavoidably happen, he was left alone, he would scream and halloo until some person came to him. When relief from pain would admit, he seemed thoughtful and contemplative, his eyes being generally closed, and his hands folded upon his breast, although he never slept without the assistance of an anodyne. There was something remarkable in his conduct about this period (which comprises about two weeks immediately preceding his death), particularly when we reflect that Thomas Paine was the author of the *Age of Reason*. He would call out during his paroxysms of distress, without intermission, "O Lord help me! God help me! Jesus Christ help me! Lord help me!" etc., repeating the same expressions without the least variation, in a tone of voice that would alarm the house. It was this conduct which induced me to think that he had abandoned his former opinions, and I was more inclined to that belief when I understood from his nurse (who is a very serious and, I believe, pious woman) that he would occasionally inquire, when he saw her engaged with a book, what she was reading, and, being answered, and at the same time asked whether she should read aloud, he assented, and would appear to give particular attention.

I took occasion during the nights of June 5th and 6th to test the strength of his opinions respecting revelation. I purposely made him a very late visit; it was a time



which seemed to suit exactly with my errand; it was midnight; he was in great distress, constantly exclaiming in the words above mentioned, when, after a considerable preface, I addressed him in the following manner, the nurse being present: "Mr. Paine, your opinions, by a large portion of the community, have been treated with deference; you have never been in the habit of mixing in your conversation words of coarse meaning; you have never indulged in the practice of profane swearing; you must be sensible that we are acquainted with your religious opinions as they are given to the world. What must we think of your present conduct? Why do you call upon Jesus Christ to help you? Do you believe that he can help you? Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ? Come, now, answer me honestly. I want an answer from the lips of a dying man, for I verily believe that you will not live twenty-four hours." I waited some time at the end of every question; he did not answer, but ceased to exclaim in the above manner. Again I addressed him: "Mr. Paine, you have not answered my questions; will you answer them? Allow me to ask again, Do you believe—or let me qualify the question, Do you wish to believe—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" After a pause of some minutes he answered: "I have no wish to believe on that subject." I then left him, and knew not whether he afterwards spoke to any person on any subject, though he lived, as I before observed, till the morning of the 8th. Such conduct, under usual circumstances, I conceive absolutely unaccountable, though, with diffidence, I would remark, not so much so in the present instance, for, though the first necessary and general result of conviction be a sincere wish to atone for evil committed, yet it may be a question worthy of able consideration whether excessive pride of opinion, consummate vanity, and inordinate self-love might not prevent or retard that otherwise natural consequence. For my own part, I believe that, had not Thomas Paine been such a distinguished infidel, he would have left less equivocal evidences of a change of opinion. Concerning the persons who visited Mr. Paine in his distress as his personal friends I heard very little, though I may observe that their number was small, and of that number there were not wanting those who endeavoured to support him in his deistical opinions, and to encourage him to "die like a man," to "hold fast his

integrity," lest Christians, or, as they were pleased to term them, hypocrites, might take advantage of his weakness, and furnish themselves with a weapon by which they might hope to destroy their glorious system of morals. Numbers visited him from motives of benevolence and Christian charity, endeavouring to effect a change of mind in respect to his religious sentiments. The labour of such was apparently lost, and they pretty generally received such treatment from him as none but good men would risk a second time, though some of those persons called frequently.

The following testimony will be new to most of our readers. It is from a letter written by Bishop Fenwick (Roman Catholic Bishop of Boston), containing a full account of a visit which he paid to Paine in his last illness. It was printed in the *United States Catholic Magazine* for 1846; in the *Catholic Herald* of Philadelphia, October 15th, 1846; in a supplement to the *Hartford Courant*, October 23rd, 1847; and in *Littell's Living Age* for January 22nd, 1848, from which we copy. Bishop Fenwick writes:—

A short time before Paine died I was sent for by him. He was prompted to this by a poor Catholic woman who went to see him in his sickness, and who told him, among other things, that in his wretched condition, if anybody could do him any good, it would be a Roman Catholic priest. This woman was an American convert (formerly a Shaking Quakeress) whom I had received into the Church but a few weeks before. She was the bearer of this message to me from Paine. I stated this circumstance to F. Kohlmann at breakfast, and requested him to accompany me. After some solicitation on my part he agreed to do so, at which I was greatly rejoiced, because I was at the time quite young and inexperienced in the ministry, and was glad to have his assistance, as I knew, from the great reputation of Paine, that I should have to do with one of the most impious as well as infamous of men. We shortly after set out for the house at Greenwich where Paine lodged, and on the way agreed on a mode of proceeding with him.

We arrived at the house; a decent-looking, elderly woman (probably his housekeeper) came to the door, and



inquired whether we were the Catholic priests, for, said she, Mr. Paine has been so much annoyed of late by other denominations calling upon him that he has left express orders with me to admit no one to-day but the clergymen of the Catholic Church. Upon assuring her that we were Catholic clergymen, she opened the door and showed us into the parlour. She then left the room, and shortly after returned to inform us that Paine was asleep, and, at the same time, expressed a wish that we would not disturb him, "for," said she, "he is always in a bad humour when roused out of his sleep. It is better we wait a little till he be awake." We accordingly sat down, and resolved to await a more favourable moment. "Gentlemen," said the lady, after having taken her seat also, "I really wish you may succeed with Mr. Paine, for he is labouring under great distress of mind ever since he was informed by his physicians that he cannot possibly live, and must die shortly. He sent for you to-day because he was told that if anyone could do him good you might. Possibly he may think you know of some remedy which his physicians are ignorant of. He is truly to be pitied. His cries when he is left alone are heartrending. 'O Lord help me !' he will exclaim during his paroxysms of distress, 'God help me !—Jesus Christ help me !' repeating the same expressions, without the least variation, in a tone of voice that would alarm the house. Sometimes he will say, 'O God, what have I done to suffer so much?' then, shortly after, 'But there is no God,' and again a little after, 'Yet if there should be, what would become of me hereafter.' Thus he will continue for some time, when on a sudden he will scream, as if in terror and agony, and call out for me by name. On one of these occasions, which are very frequent, I went to him and inquired what he wanted. 'Stay with me,' he replied, 'for God's sake, for I cannot bear to be left alone.' I then observed that I could not always be with him, as I had much to attend to in the house. 'Then,' said he, 'send even a child to stay with me, for it is a hell to be alone.' I never saw," she concluded, "a more unhappy, a more forsaken, man. It seems he cannot reconcile himself to die."

Such was the conversation of the woman who had received us, and who probably had been employed to nurse and take care of him during his illness. She was a Protestant, yet seemed very desirous that

we should afford him some relief in his state of abandonment bordering on complete despair. Having remained thus some time in the parlour, we at length heard a noise in the adjoining passage-way, which induced us to believe that Mr. Paine, who was sick in that room, had awoken. We accordingly proposed to proceed thither, which was assented to by the woman, and she opened the door for us. On entering, we found him just getting out of his slumber. A more wretched being in appearance I never beheld. He was lying in a bed sufficiently decent of itself, but at present besmeared with filth ; his look was that of a man greatly tortured in mind ; his eyes haggard, his countenance forbidding, and his whole appearance that of one whose better days had been one continued scene of debauch. His only nourishment at this time, as we were informed, was nothing more than milk punch, in which he indulged to the full extent of his weak state. He had partaken, undoubtedly, but very recently of it, as the sides and corners of his mouth exhibited very unequivocal traces of it, as well as of blood, which had also followed in the track and left its mark on the pillow. His face, to a certain extent, had also been besmeared with it.

Immediately upon their making known the object of their visit, Paine interrupted the speaker by saying : "That's enough, sir ; that's enough" ; and again interrupting him, "I see what you would be about. I wish to hear no more from you, sir. My mind is made up on that subject. I look upon the whole of the Christian scheme to be a tissue of absurdities and lies, and Jesus Christ to be nothing more than a cunning knave and impostor." He drove them out of the room, exclaiming : "Away with you, and your God too ; leave the room instantly ; all that you have uttered are lies—filthy lies ; and if I had a little more time I would prove it, as I did about your impostor Jesus Christ."

This, we think, will suffice. We have a mass of letters containing statements confirmatory of what we have published in regard to the life and death of Paine, but nothing more can be required.

INGERSOLL'S SECOND REPLY

Peoria, November 2nd, 1877.

To the Editor of the "New York Observer."

You ought to have honesty enough to admit that you did, in your paper of July 19th, offer to prove that the absurd story that Thomas Paine died in terror and agony on account of the religious opinions he had expressed was true. You ought to have fairness enough to admit that you called upon me to deposit one thousand dollars with an honest man, that you might, by proving that Thomas Paine did die in terror, obtain the money.

You ought to have honour enough to admit that you challenged me, and that you commenced the controversy concerning Thomas Paine.

You ought to have goodness enough to admit that you were mistaken in the charges you made.

You ought to have manhood enough to do what you falsely asserted that Thomas Paine did: you ought to recant. You ought to admit publicly that you slandered the dead; that you falsified history; that you defamed the defenceless; that you deliberately denied what you had published in your own paper. There is an old saying to the effect that open confession is good for the soul. To you is presented a splendid opportunity of testing the truth of this saying.

Nothing has astonished me more than your lack of common honesty exhibited in this controversy. In your last you quote from Dr. J. W. Francis. Why did you leave out that portion in which Dr. Francis says *that Cheetham with settled malignity wrote the life of Paine?* Why did you leave out that part in which Dr. Francis says that Cheetham in the same way *slandered Alexander Hamilton and De Witt Clinton?* Is it your business to suppress the truth? Why did you not publish the entire letter of Bishop Fen-

wick? Was it because it proved beyond all cavil that Thomas Paine did not recant? Was it because in the light of that letter Mary Roscoe, Mary Hinsdale, and Grant Thorburn appeared unworthy of belief? Dr. J. W. Francis says in the same article from which you quoted, "*Paine clung to his infidelity until the last moment of his life.*" Why did you not publish that? It was the first line immediately above what you did quote. You must have seen it. Why did you suppress it? A lawyer doing a thing of this character is denominated a shyster. I do not know the appropriate word to designate a theologian guilty of such an act.

You brought forward three witnesses, pretending to have personal knowledge about the life and death of Thomas Paine: Grant Thorburn, Mary Roscoe, and Mary Hinsdale. In my reply I took the ground that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale must have been the same person. I thought it impossible that Paine should have had a conversation with Mary Roscoe, and then one *precisely* like it with Mary Hinsdale. Acting upon this conviction, I proceeded to show that the conversation never could have happened, that it was absurdly false to say that Paine asked the opinion of a girl as to his works who had never read but little of them. I then showed, by the testimony of William Cobbett, that he visited Mary Hinsdale in 1819, taking with him a statement concerning the recantation of Paine, given him by Mr. Collins, and that, upon being shown this statement, she said that "it was so long ago that she could not speak positively to any part of the matter—that she would not say any part of the paper was true." At that time she knew nothing, and remembered nothing. I also showed that she was a kind of standing witness to prove that others recanted. Willet Hicks denounced her as unworthy of belief.



To-day the following from the New York *World* was received, showing that I was right in my conjecture :—

TOM PAINE'S DEATH-BED.

*To the Editor of the "World."*

SIR,—I see by your paper that Bob Ingersoll discredits Mary Hinsdale's story of the scenes which occurred at the death-bed of Thomas Paine. No one who knew that good lady would for one moment doubt her veracity or question her testimony. Both she and her husband were Quaker preachers, and well known and respected inhabitants of New York City. *Ingersoll is right in his conjecture that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale was the same person.* Her maiden name was Roscoe, and she married Henry Hinsdale. My mother was a Roscoe, a niece of Mary Roscoe, and lived with her for some time. I have heard her relate the story of Tom Paine's dying remorse, as told her by her aunt, who was a witness to it. She says (in a letter I have just received from her) : "He (Tom Paine) suffered fearfully from remorse, and renounced his infidel principles, calling on God to forgive him, and wishing his pamphlets and books to be burned, saying he could not die in peace until it was done."

(Rev.) A. W. CORNELL.

*Harpersville, New York.*

You will notice that the testimony of Mary Hinsdale has been drawing interest since 1809, and has materially increased. If Paine "suffered fearfully from remorse, renounced his infidel opinions, and called on God to forgive him," it is hardly generous for the Christian world to fasten the fangs of malice in the flesh of his reputation.

So Mary Roscoe was Mary Hinsdale, and as Mary Hinsdale has been shown by her own admission to Mr. Cobbett to have known nothing of the matter, and as Mary Hinsdale was not, according to Willet Hicks, worthy of belief—as she told a falsehood of the same kind about Mary Lockwood, and was, according to Mr. Collins, addicted to the use of opium—this disposes of her and her testimony.

There remains upon the stand Grant Thorburn. Concerning this witness, I

received, yesterday, from the eminent biographer and essayist, James Parton, the following epistle :—

Newburyport, Mass.

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL,—Touching Grant Thorburn, I personally know him to have been a dishonest man. At the age of ninety-two he copied, with trembling hand, a piece from a newspaper and brought it to the office of the *Home Journal* as his own. It was I who received it and detected the deliberate forgery. If you are ever going to continue this subject, I will give you the exact facts.

Fervently yours,

JAMES PARTON.

After this, you are welcome to what remains of Grant Thorburn.

There is one thing that I have noticed during this controversy regarding Thomas Paine. In no instance that I now call to mind has any Christian writer spoken respectfully of Mr. Paine. All have taken particular pains to call him "Tom" Paine. Is it not a little strange that religion should make men so coarse and ill-mannered?

I have often wondered what these same gentlemen would say if I should speak of the men eminent in the annals of Christianity in the same way. What would they say if I should write about "Tim" Dwight, old "Ad" Clark, "Tom" Scott, "Jim" McKnight, "Bill" Hamilton, "Dick" Whately, "Bill" Paley, and "Jack" Calvin?

They would say of me then just what I *think* of them now.

Even if we have religion, do not let us try to get along without good manners. Rudeness is exceedingly unbecoming, even in a saint. Persons who forgive their enemies ought, to say the least, to treat with politeness those who have never injured them.

It is exceedingly gratifying to me that I have compelled you to say that "Paine died a blaspheming infidel." Hereafter it is to be hoped nothing will be heard about his having recanted. As an answer to such slander his friends can confidently quote the following from the *New York Observer* of November 1st, 1877 :—



"WE HAVE NEVER STATED IN ANY FORM, NOR HAVE WE EVER SUPPOSED, THAT PAINE ACTUALLY RENOUNCED HIS INFIDELITY. THE ACCOUNTS AGREE IN STATING THAT HE DIED A BLASPHEMING INFIDEL."

This for all coming time will refute the slanders of the Churches yet to be.

Right here allow me to ask: If you never supposed that Paine renounced his infidelity, why did you try to prove by Mary Hinsdale that which you believed to be untrue?

From the bottom of my heart I thank myself for having compelled you to admit that Thomas Paine did not recant.

For the purpose of verifying your own admission concerning the death of Mr. Paine, permit me to call your attention to the following affidavit:—

Wabash, Indiana, October 27th, 1877.  
Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

DEAR SIR,—The following statement of facts is at your disposal. In the year 1833 Willet Hicks made a visit to Indiana, and stayed over night at my father's house, four miles East of Richmond. In the morning at breakfast my mother asked Willet Hicks the following questions:—

"Was thee with Thomas Paine during his last sickness?"

Mr. Hicks said: "I was with him every day during the latter part of his last sickness."

"Did he express any regret in regard to writing the *Age of Reason*, as the published accounts say he did—those accounts that have the credit of emanating from his Catholic housekeeper?"

Mr. Hicks replied: "He did not in any way, by word or action."

"Did he call on God or Jesus Christ, asking either of them to forgive his sins, or did he curse them, or either of them?"

Mr. Hicks answered: "He did not. He died as easy as any one I ever saw die, and I have seen many die in my time."

WILLIAM B. BARNES.

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
October 27th, 1877.

WARREN BIGLER, Notary Public.

You say in your last that "Thomas Paine was abandoned of God." So far as this controversy is concerned, it seems to me that in that sentence you have most graphically described your own condition.

Wishing you success in all honest undertakings, I remain,

Yours truly,

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

## LIFE

BORN of love and hope, of ecstasy and pain, of agony and fear, of tears and joy—dowered with the wealth of two united hearts—held in happy arms, with lips upon life's drifted font, blue-veined and fair, where perfect peace finds perfect form—rocked by willing feet and wooed to shadowy shores of sleep by siren mother singing soft and low—looking with wonder's wide and startled eyes at common things of life and day—taught by want and wish and contact with the things that touch the dimpled flesh of babes—lured by light and flame, and

charmed by colour's wondrous robes—learning the use of hands and feet, and by the love of mimicry beguiled to utter speech—releasing prisoned thoughts from crabbed and curious marks on soiled and tattered leaves—puzzling the brain with crooked numbers and their changing, tangled worth—and so through years of alternating day and night, until the captive grows familiar with the chains and walls and limitations of a life.

And time runs on in sun and shade, until the one of all the world is wooed and won, and all the lore of love is

taught and learned again. Again a home is built with the fair chamber wherein faint dreams, like cool and shadowy vales, divide the billowed hours of love. Again the miracle of a birth—the pain and joy, the kiss of welcome, and the cradle-song drowning the drowsy prattle of a babe.

And then the sense of obligation and of wrong—pity for those who toil and weep—tears for the imprisoned and despised—love for the generous dead, and in the heart the rapture of a high resolve.

And then ambition, with its lust of pelf and place and power, longing to put upon its breast distinction's worthless badge. Then keener thoughts of men, and eyes that see behind the smiling mask of craft—flattered no more by the obsequious cringe of gain and greed—knowing the uselessness of hoarded gold—of honour bought from those who charge the usury of self-respect—of power that only bends a coward's knees and forces from the lips of fear the lies

of praise. Knowing at last the unstudied gesture of esteem, the reverent eyes made rich with honest thought, and holding high above all other things—high as hope's great throbbing star above the darkness of the dead—the love of wife and child and friend.

Then locks of grey, and growing love of other days and half-remembered things—then holding withered hands of those who first held his, while over dim and loving eyes death softly presses down the lids of rest.

And so, locking in marriage vows his children's hands and crossing others on the breasts of peace, with daughters' babes upon his knees, the white hair mingling with the gold, he journeys on from day to day to that horizon where the dusk is waiting for the night. At last, sitting by the holy hearth of home as evening's embers change from red to grey, he falls asleep within the arms of her he worshipped and adored, feeling upon his pallid lips love's last and holiest kiss.

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## IF DEATH ENDS ALL

AND suppose, after all, that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being for ever with those we love and those who have loved us—next to that is to be wrapt in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear.

I had rather think of those I have loved and lost as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world; I would rather think of them as unconscious dust; I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the stream, floating in the clouds, bursting in light upon the shores of other worlds; I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten night, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls have been clutched by an orthodox god. But as for me, I will leave the dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs in my heart I will cherish; I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears.





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